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FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

A BARREL OF COIN, OR, THE LUCK OF A BOY TRADER.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



The top hoop came off, and the heavy barrel slipped from Jack's grasp. Striking the ground, it fell over and from under the displaced rubbish a stream of gold coin and banknotes was revealed to the astonished gaze of the three.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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A BARREL OF COIN

OR,

THE LUCK OF A BOY TRADER

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

JACK, THE BOY TRADER.

"Seems to me I must have taken the wrong road," mused Jack Greely, as he drove along in the gathering gloom of a May afternoon.

He had just emerged from a long wood of pines and cedars, and the prospect he faced was not what he expected.

The landscape was cheerless and uncultivated.

Half a mile away on the left it seemed to end in nothing at all.

On the other hand it broke into rifts and hollows, and was thickly sprinkled with rocks and innumerable trees.

There wasn't a house in sight, and night was rapidly approaching.

The air was damp and chill, and impregnated with that peculiar saline flavor that told him the sea was not far off.

"I believe I've blundered off on the road over the cliffs," he muttered. "The farmer at whose house I stopped last told me there was a village five miles ahead. If I haven't gone considerably over five miles, I'm a poor guesser, and there isn't the sign of a village in sight."

All signs indicated that he had unconsciously taken to the road over the cliffs, and the only consolation he had was that it led to a small seaport town he had not intended to visit.

Just how far off that town was he had no idea.

It might be a mile or it might be ten.

At any rate, the course he had drifted into had taken him off the route he laid out for himself when he left Portland, with Bath as his destination.

However, he could get back on it again at some point ahead, and he probably would not lose much by the error.

Nevertheless, he was a boy who did not like to deviate from a preconceived line of action.

If he had known that taking the wrong road was the luckiest thing that ever happened to him, he would have blessed his guiding star.

But he didn't know then, nor for some time afterward.

He drove on for perhaps half a mile further, when the road began to descend in a winding way that brought him nearer to the great restless ocean which he could not see.

By this time the prospect was growing contracted by the deepening shades of dusk, but he did not mind this, as the road was too plain to miss.

Suddenly he saw a light come into view.

It was shining from a window of a dwelling not a great way ahead.

It was a welcome sight to him.

"That's a house yonder. I'll stop there and make inquiries. If the town is some distance away, maybe I can get accommodated for the night and secure for Sancho feed and shelter. Get up, old nag. Don't you smell oats, or a whisp or two of hay?"

The horse pricked up his ears and then increased his pace a little.

There wasn't anything remarkable in the looks of Jack's animal, but the boy was ready to swear that he had as much brains as any horse that ever stepped.

He and Jack had been companions in business for the better part of a year, and were on the best of terms.

The young trader had bought him for a song when he seemed to be on his last legs, and by a course of humane treatment had given him a new lease of life.

From a scarecrow of skins and bones he had developed into a healthy looking creature, and we assume that the animal was grateful to his new master.

At any rate, he gave evidence of an affectionate feeling toward Jack, and it is not impossible that had the boy parted with him the horse would have missed him greatly, and perhaps have worried himself into his former skeleton-like aspect.

Jack, however, had no intention of parting with him, for apart from the feeling he had for the animal, he needed him in his business.

The house proved to be further away than Jack thought it was—that is, it was not actually at a greater distance in a straight line, but owing to the swing of the road, it took longer to reach it than if he had been able to take a direct route.

Finally Jack reached it and knocked at the door.

A rough-looking man, in the garb of a coast fisherman, answered his summons.

"What do you want?" he demanded, crustily.

"Will you tell me how far the town of Seaport is from here?" asked Jack.

"A mile, as a bird flies, but considerably further by road."

"How much further?"

"P'raps three miles from here."

"Thank you; this road goes straight there, I suppose?"

"Yes. Who are you? A stranger, I calculate?"

"I am. A traveling trader."

"What do you trade in?"

"A little of everything that farmers and their families need."

The man peered over at the boy's wagon.

"Maybe you've somethin' I want," he said.

"If I have I'm ready to do business with you."

"Got any good-sized tin pans?"

"Yes."

"I'll come out and look at 'em. Wait till I get a lantern."

In a few minutes the man was looking at the pans.

He selected three and asked the price.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Jack. "I'll call it a deal for a night's lodging with supper and breakfast for me and the horse if you can accommodate us."

"It's a bargain," replied the man, "if you'll put up with pot luck."

"I'm used to that," answered the boy.

"All right," said the man. "Lead your animal around to the barn at the back. I'll show you the way."

Jack followed him, leading Sancho.

The man helped him take the horse out of the shafts, and then led the animal to a vacant stall in the barn.

He was given water and a good supply of hay, and left to the happy enjoyment of his meal, while Jack and his host went into the house, which was a two-story, old-fashioned building, of rather contracted dimensions.

The man had been getting his supper in the kitchen

when interrupted by Jack, and he proceeded to cook some more fish and potatoes, and make a fresh pot of coffee for the boy.

"What's your name?" asked the man. "Mine is Rickards."

"Jack Greeley," replied the visitor.

"Where do you hail from?"

"From Portland, last, and I'm bound for Bath."

"How do you make out at your business?"

"Pretty well, all things considered."

"How long have you been at it?"

"About a year."

"You do more trading than cash, I s'pose?"

"Oh, yes. I can nearly always make a trade sale, while cash is not so easy to get. The farmers hang on to their money like grim death."

"Then you'll sell the stuff you pick up when you reach a town?"

"Yes, and lay in a new supply of notions."

"I'll look your wagon over in the mornin'. I might find other things I need. I've got a number of things I'd like to trade off if you'll take 'em."

"I'll buy anything that I can sell, but, of course, I don't give all they're worth, otherwise I wouldn't make anything."

"I s'pose so," responded the man. "We've all got to live," he added with a peculiar grin.

"How do you make your living? By fishing?"

"I'm half fisherman, half farmer."

"You don't live here alone, do you?"

"No. We, that is, me and my pardner, have a big boy to look after the place while we tend to the boat. They both went over to Seaport this afternoon, and I don't expect 'em back till late. You'll have to put up with a bed of hay in the barn, as there ain't no bed to spare in the house. I dare say you don't object?"

"Oh, no; it won't be the first time I've roosted on hay."

"You sleep well, don't you?" asked the man with a keen glance.

"Like a top. I don't often wake up till morning once I close my eyes."

A look of satisfaction rested in the man's eyes.

"Set up to the table now. Your grub is ready."

Jack required no second bidding, and ate like a hungry boy.

"I heard there was quite a gale along the coast a day or two ago," said Jack.

"Considerable of one."

"A farmer along the road I traveled said that a steamer bound for Boston to Quebec went ashore on some reef in this neighborhood, and that everybody was lost."

"That's a fact. The reef is out yonder. The bell-buoy anchored to it that would have warned the pilot broke loose somehow during the early part of the blow and drifted out to sea. The steamer didn't come along till after dark, when the tide was making in and the wind blowing dead on shore. Not hearing the bell, it is supposed that the pilot thought he was further off shore than he was. At any rate, the steamer struck on the reef and soon went to pieces. I helped carry half a dozen bodies around to the town this morning. We found 'em high and dry on the beach."

"Wrecks seem to happen in spite of all precautions," said Jack.

"That's right. But they don't happen so frequently as they used to before the coast-guard came into commission and the Government built so many lighthouses."

"What do you keep in those tubs in the corner?" asked the boy.

"Salt fish for market. Those in the corner are goin' to Bath. If you was goin' straight there, and had room in your wagon, I'd make a deal with you for takin' 'em along with you."

"I might manage somehow if you made it an object to me," replied Jack.

"I'll speak to my pardner and let you know in the mornin'. If you took 'em it would save us the time and trouble of takin' 'em ourselves. Expect to do business in Seaport?"

"No, I didn't intend to go there."

"You didn't? Then why are you headed for the place?"

Jack explained how he had got off his right road, which was the cause of him being so near the coast.

"You don't have to go to town to get back on your route. If we make a deal with you to carry the tubs, we'll send our boy along with you to p'int out a short cut that'll save you time."

"Will you? That'll suit me all right," replied Jack, pushing back his chair from the table, having finished his supper.

They talked awhile longer, and then Rickards took Jack to the barn and showed the boy a pile of hay on which he could make his bed.

CHAPTER II.

JACK MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Some hours later, or a little after midnight, Jack was awakened by the flash of light in his eyes.

He opened his eyes and saw two men, one of whom he recognized as Rickards, just turning away.

Rickards had a lantern in his hand, and had been showing the boy to his companion.

"He's all right," Jack heard Rickards say. "He's a travelin' trader, and I calculate it's safe to send the tubs by him to Flint, at Bath."

"But an excise officer might overhaul the wagon on the road, examine the tubs and find that they carried brandy as well as fish. Then the boy, to save himself, would naturally tell where he got the tubs, and that would make the suspicion that hangs over us a certainty, and the Government officials would soon be around here as thick as flies around the bung of a molasses barrel."

"That's true enough, but there isn't half the danger of his wagon being inspected for contraband stuff, as one of our teams. The three of us are known, and if any one of us were caught drivin' a load of tubs to Bath, we'd certainly be held up and the tubs subjected to examination. There's a reward of five hundred dollars standing now to any person who will give information to the Government that will lead to the detection of the person bringing im-

ported liquors into this State. I know there are others beside the excise officers who are trying to get their fingers on the reward—several of our neighbors, for instance."

Let them try, that's all the good it will do them," replied the other. "We've got \$5,000 worth of prime cognac stored in a secret part of the caverns along the shore, and I defy anybody, from the revenue sharks down, to find it."

"That would be a fine haul for somebody to make, for besides the reward he would be entitled to one-half of what the liquor fetched at public auction," said Rickards, with a short laugh.

"Well, let's get over to the caverns and see how things are getting on there. I left Barney on the watch when I went to Seaport to try and learn the object of the revenue cutter putting in there this afternoon."

"Did you find out anything?"

"Yes. She put a couple of new revenue men ashore, and we may expect to find them nosing around the neighborhood for some days to come. As the fog is coming in thick, I should not be surprised if they and some men from the coast-guard station will visit the caverns to-night. I should like to see and make a note of their faces so I'd know them again."

The men passed down the rude flight of steps and made their way out of the barn, leaving Jack in a state of no little astonishment over what he had heard from their lips.

For a few minutes he stared into the darkness, but the closing of the door below aroused him.

Since leaving Portland he had heard stories about the activity of certain unknown persons in the vicinity of the town of Seaport, who were in league with a clique of Canadian smugglers engaged in the practice of surreptitiously introducing fine French cognac into the State of Maine.

It was known that the drug stores in a great many of the towns and cities had purchased this liquor at a discount, and were dispensing it across their counters to customers presenting physicians' prescriptions calling for brandy.

The Government was just waking up to the urgency of putting a stop to the traffic, which had also been carried on at other points along the coast at various times, the numerous bays and inlets of the State offering encouragement to individuals whose bump of honesty was not as well developed as their nerve.

Jack never let a chance get away from him, and it immediately struck him that he had accidentally gained a valuable clue that might land the Government award and perhaps something more in his pocket.

His had been rather a rocky road, since the death of his mother had thrown him upon his own resources.

There was not a big profit in his business, and it was a case of hustle to make things pay.

The idea of making a considerable haul at one clip made the blood tingle in his veins.

It drove sleep from his eyes, and fatigue from his limbs, and before you could whisper "Jack Robinson," he was slipping down from the loft intent on following the two men, who were undoubtedly hand-in-glove with the liquor smugglers.

But he met with an obstruction at the start—the barn door was locked on the outside.

For reasons of his own Rickards had taken the precau-

tion of locking his boy lodger in, although both men believed that youth was wrapped in profound slumber.

It might not have been on the lad's account, but for some other reason.

"Blocked," muttered Jack, with a feeling of disappointment.

But he recovered in a moment.

"This can't be the only means of exit," he thought.

"There must be a window or two. I'll look."

He always carried matches in his pocket, and struck one.

Looking around, he spied a wooden shutter near the last of the three stalls.

"That covers the hole where they toss the manure out," he said.

To reach and open it was the work of but a few moments.

Outside everything was dark, and the air was somewhat obscured by a thin, palpitating white mist—the advance guard of the incoming sea fog.

Knowing he had no time to lose if he hoped to follow the tracks of the two men, Jack scrambled out of the hole and landed on a soft heap which he rightly judged was partly dried manure.

The men were not in sight, which was not surprising considering the conditions of the night.

To determine the exact direction they had taken was something of a problem.

The sea coast lay ahead, but the caverns for which the men were bound might be straight ahead, or to the right or left, for all Jack knew.

If the men had diverged in one direction or the other, the boy had no means of knowing.

He decided that the best course for him to pursue was to march straight ahead.

It was hardly better than a gambler's chance, but he couldn't do better.

It was simply a matter of luck whether or not he would overhaul the men.

He hurried forward as fast as he could over the uneven ground, which was obstructed with boulders, and stunted pines, cedars and firs.

The ground sloped upward for perhaps an eighth of a mile, and then he found himself following an unexpected descent.

The mist grew less and less apparent now, and he was able to see that he had got into a kind of defile which furnished a well-defined path, narrow and tortuous, that led straight into the heart of the cliffs.

"I believe I've hit the right way to the caverns by good luck—perhaps the rear entrance, if they have one. At any rate, I guess this narrow path leads somewhere, maybe to the shore. I'm glad there's no mist here, for there is no telling what danger I might blunder into if I couldn't see ahead of me."

After what seemed to be an endless trip among the rocky barriers that hedged in the path, Jack at length came to a dark hole or opening in a tall wall of rock.

He paused and tried to pierce the deep obscurity inside, but that was quite out of the question.

It would not do to strike a match lest the light betray his presence to the two men who might not be far away.

To go ahead recklessly was to expose himself to possible perils hidden by the darkness.

The only safe thing was to feel his way along, and this he started to do, keeping his ears on the alert.

In this way he proceeded cautiously, surrounded by a gloom so dense that it seemed almost palpable.

"This is a pretty strenuous adventure," he muttered.

"I'm afraid it's not going to pan out the way I expected. I haven't the least idea where those men are, and unless I can overhaul them their secret will be safe as far as I'm concerned. I'd like to make that \$500. Had I been able to keep on the heels of those chaps as I figured on, I might have stood a show of winning, but as things are—hello! Is that a light?"

It was a light—the glow from a lantern carried by somebody who had suddenly come into his line of vision.

Jack took a chance and proceeded faster.

The man with the lantern was walking slowly, and the boy overtook him rapidly.

Jack soon saw that he was not one of the men he wanted to catch up with, but a small, old man, bent of figure, apparently by age and infirmity.

As the boy drew closer the light of the lantern dimly showed him his subterranean surroundings.

He was certainly in a great cavern whose sides and roof were lost in the obscurity.

Jack followed the old man at a fair distance, wondering what errand he was bound on in such a wild spot at that hour of night.

The old chap apparently did not fear observation, for the lantern certainly made a mark of him.

He went shuffling forward, presumably with a definite purpose in view.

Coming to a rude flight of steps cut out of the solid rock, the old man went down, his lantern illuminating with a weird radiance the natural formations of the passage that connected with another cavern below which had an opening on the sea.

Through this opening the fog was sifting and drifting about the cave.

The old man seemed to know his way well, for he went on without hesitation into another cavern, and from that to another, neither of which had any opening on the ocean.

Crossing a fourth cavern, with a low, uneven roof and contracted sides, he entered a kind of gallery which overlooked another large cavern, from the roof of which hung many pendant rocks of thin and worn appearance not unlike huge stalactites.

The gallery terminated in another hole facing the sea, and here the old man paused and seemed to be sniffing at the whisps of fog that made their way in.

Jack was close behind him now, the inequalities of the place offering a score of places for concealment.

There was scarcely a breath of air stirring outside.

The ocean lay perfectly calm, but invisible, and not a whisper rose from the rocks when the surges so often beat with a sullen roar.

As the old man stood peering out into the mist and darkness, Jack heard two distant strokes of a bell.

"Two!" muttered the old chap, aloud, as if talking to some one close by. "Ah! few about the bay know the hour, save the village clock and old Caleb Stone. This black

hole is plaguey dark to-night. So are the mines where gold is dug. Ah! if this were only a gold mine, I might perhaps find pieces of the yellow rock that would add a little something to my store. But no, these are nothing but useless caverns, hollowed out of worthless rock in some strange and unaccountable way. Useless! Nay, I am wrong. In the great opening below more than once after a storm I have wrested from the green ooze and seaweed some articles of value the sale of which later brought me a few pieces of money. Ah! what a fine thing it is to have money—plenty of it. If I live long enough, maybe I'll have—no, no, I mustn't whisper my secret. Even these stone walls may have ears, and no one must know that I have anything. The world is too cruel and unjust. Have I not suffered from it? I will venture again to the entrance below. The tide is high, and the indraught may have drawn something from the late wreck. Were it ever so little, it were good for poor old Caleb Stone—poor, very poor."

He rubbed his skinny hands together and chuckled, the action causing the lantern to dance and flash a hundred odd gleams about among the shadows of the place.

"Ah! Why do not wrecks happen oftener? I can remember well when every storm shed its harvest on these iron-bound shores; but no more—no more. The light-houses and the coast-guard have interfered, and seldom does a gale nowadays reward my vigil here. There, on the reef yonder, I saw the steamer breaking up two nights ago. Not with my eyes, for the fog was too thick, but with my senses. I listened for the tones of the bell-buoy, but it was still. I wondered that its warning notes should be silent—as silent as the grave that beckoned to the crew and passengers. How could I know that it had broken from its great steel chain and drifted out to sea? Was it for the benefit of poor old Caleb Stone it did that? They say there was gold aboard the steamer. Gold!" The speaker drew in his breath with a sucking noise. "Ah! What a pity gold does not swim, else it might have drifted to my feet as I stood at the water's edge and scanned the whirling waters."

The old man heaved a sigh of regret, and then picking out a narrow path among the rocks outside, disappeared into the darkness.

CHAPTER III.

AT THE POINT OF THE REVOLVER.

"I wonder who that old chap is?" thought Jack, as he stepped to the hole and sticking his head out saw the lantern twinkling down the incline, its light looking dim and ghostly in the fog. "He looks all of seventy years of age. Judging by his mumblings he haunts these caverns regularly, and yet he does not seem to have any connection with the liquor smugglers. I guess he's a little light in his upper story, and something of a miser, too. Talks about wrecks as if he delighted in them. I wonder if he was a wrecker in his early days? He appears to be always on the lookout for some marine casualty for the sake of what the waves might bring to him. I guess it's little enough of real value that he ever picks up along the shore these days.

Well, I must follow him and see what happens, for I don't see that I can gain anything by remaining here."

As Jack didn't know the way down the rocky path, he had to be cautious.

The old man had the advantage of a lantern, and, besides, had doubtless trod the descent hundreds of times.

The walking, however, was better than the boy expected.

As he began to overtake the old man, the lantern suddenly vanished, and with it went old Caleb Stone.

When Jack reached that point he found that he was close to the dark entrance of a lower cavern opening on the sea.

The tide was up and washing into it.

The old man was bent over, peering about into the pools and crevices where the water laved in with gurgling sounds.

Jack paused and watched him for awhile, and then kept on till he got into the cavern behind the ancient chap.

Suddenly Caleb Stone uttered a cry of delight.

Jack saw him go splashing recklessly out into the water and then pounce down on something.

"He's got hold of some prize," thought the boy. "I wonder what it amounts to?"

The old man tugged at some object that resisted his strength.

He went fairly frantic over his efforts to dislodge it from the spot where it appeared to be stuck.

"I must give the old chap a hand, or there's no saying what'll happen to him. He's acting like a lunatic," said Jack.

He ran forward into the water, almost expecting to see the old fellow carried off his feet by the water.

"Here, I'll help you," he said, as his eyes rested on a small trunk covered with large brass-headed nails.

With a snarling cry Caleb Stone turned on him.

"It's mine—mine!" he shouted, hoarsely. "You sha'n't touch it."

"But you can't pull it in. I'll do it for you."

"No, no, no—leave it alone. I won't be robbed."

"Why, I won't rob you, old man. Do I look like a thief?"

Caleb Stone glared at him with blood-shot eyes.

"Ha! You're not one of them."

"One of whom?"

"You're a stranger. Where did you come from? What brings you here?"

"Never mind about me. If you want that trunk, I'll help you land it."

"You won't take it away from me?" said the old man, suspiciously.

"Why should I? I've got no use for it."

"No, you have no use for it. You are young and hearty and can make your own living. I'm old and poor—very, very poor. If you take that from me I shall starve, and so will my grandchild."

"Don't worry, I won't take it from you. Here, lay hold and help me get it into the cave."

The old man, trembling like an aspen leaf, put forth one of his arms; but his strength amounted to nothing.

Jack gave the trunk a yank and it came out of its crevice.

Then he pulled it well up into the cavern, the hard, sandy floor facilitating its passage.

"There you are, old man. Take charge of it," said Jack, releasing his grip.

"Go, go; leave me with it," cried Caleb Stone, without a word of thanks.

At that moment a shrill whistle sounded somewhere without on the rocks.

The old man started as if stung.

"No, no, don't leave me. Help me carry this trunk further back. Quick!" he cried in a fever of excitement. "Those rascals will rob me—rob me, d'ye hear?"

"What rascals do you mean?" asked Jack.

"The rascals who do business here."

"Do you mean the liquor smugglers?"

"Yes, yes. If I only knew where they store their cargo I'd—but don't stand looking at me. They may kill us both if they find us here. Help me with this trunk. I will not be robbed. I'll die first. Better die than lose the chance to make a little money. Every little helps. I can sell this trunk, and maybe there is something in it worth—no, no, there's nothing in it. It's too light."

"Too light!" cried Jack. "Why, it's heavy enough to hold quite a lot of gold."

"Gold! No, no; there's no gold in it. There's nothing in it worth having."

His anxiety to hide the possible nature of its contents was pitiable.

Under some circumstances Jack would have felt like laughing at the grotesque figure he cut.

He had a shrewd idea that the old man looked upon the trunk as a rich prize, but he had no wish to dispute its possession with him.

He helped Caleb Stone move it to a sheltered spot some distance from the entrance, and then the old man begged him again to go away.

Jack moved back toward the entrance.

He became sensible of a draught coming through the opening.

A light breeze had probably sprung up.

He was rather glad of this, for it might disperse the fog, and enable him to see his way better about among the rocks.

The person who whistled had not made his appearance in the cavern.

Jack wondered if he was one of the smugglers' shore accomplices whose trail he had tried to follow without success.

He reached the cavern entrance, now completely filled with the mist.

It was readily to be distinguished by its opaque whiteness.

It did not reach as low as the water, and was moving about in a mass under the influence of the breeze.

It also seemed to be thinning fast.

"I'll wait here till it lifts, and then I'll get back to the cavern above," said Jack to himself.

Once more the whistle, a peculiar one, rang out on the night air.

A moment later Jack saw an object, which looked to him like a woman, moving out and in among the rocks on the opposite side of the entrance from where he stood.

The person, whoever it was, was coming into the cave.

A temporary break in the mist showed Jack that the newcomer was a young girl, then the fog closed in about her and for some moments he could scarcely make her out.

"A girl!" exclaimed Jack, in some surprise. "What in creation brings her here at this hour in the morning? Is she an ally of the smugglers, too?"

The girl glided in at the entrance and then crouched out of sight behind a large rock.

"What did she do that for?" he asked himself. "Maybe the coast-guard are on the shore and she is hiding from them. The whistle probably came from one of them. Yes, that girl must be connected with the smugglers' allies or she wouldn't be around here at this unearthly hour. And hiding, too. That's suspicious of itself. I must watch her. Maybe I'll find out the secret I'm after through her."

Jack retired behind a boulder and kept his eye on the spot where she had sheltered herself.

Another rift in the palpitating mist showed two men coming over the rocks by the same route followed by the girl.

They came on swiftly, like men who knew their way perfectly, and in a few moments entered the mouth of the cavern.

Jack could not distinguish them very well, but he believed one of them was Rickards.

The other did not seem to be the man who had been in the loft of the barn with that individual.

"I tell you it was a woman. I think I know one when I see one."

It was Rickard's voice that spoke.

"You think of nothin' but women. I say it was a spy. One of them new revenue chaps," replied the other, in some excitement.

"You're wrong. It was a a woman, for I saw she had skirts."

"That's nothin'. Maybe a man in disguise to throw us off our guard. What should a woman be doin' around here at this time of night?"

"Well, man or woman, there's only one. Where did you hide your lantern. Get it, strike a light, and we'll look around. If it's a revenue officer in disguise, I'm in a mood to sew his mouth up for him."

"Not with your revolver, Rickards. The report would attract notice, and bring the coast-guard here. I saw him pass up the beach only a few minutes ago."

"There's more ways than one of killin' a cat, Watling," answered Rickards, significantly. "A clip on the head with a stone would put him out of business."

"Very likely, but look out he don't shoot first. These revenue men are armed, and always ready for business."

"Even so, there are two of us, and we ought to be able to handle him. Besides, Noakes will be here presently. The spy, be he man or woman, can't get out of here except through this opening, for none but ourselves know the secret exit into the inner cavern. We will see that he doesn't get out. Now get your lantern and let us hunt about."

"You can do the huntin', for one of us must remain near the entrance to prevent the spy from slippin' out on us," said Watling.

He reached under a boulder and drew forth a lantern, which he proceeded to light.

Rickards snatched it from his hand and started forward, flashing the light around.

A stone suddenly rolled down at his feet.

"Ha, what was that?" he cried, holding the lantern up.

Jack, looking across, saw the girl in the act of climbing up the side of the cavern.

"A woman after all," cried Rickards. "Come down, young lady, or I'll put a bullet into you."

The girl uttered a low scream, and then obeyed his order.

Seizing her by the wrist, Rickards dragged her into the center of the cave, and flashed the light in her face.

Jack saw that she was a poorly dressed girl, but very pretty in face and figure.

"I think I've seen you before, miss," cried Rickards, in no pleasant tone. "I want to know what brought you snoopin' around this neighborhood at this hour."

"I came to find my grandfather," she replied in a trembling voice.

"Your grandfather, eh? I thought I knew you. I suppose old Caleb Stone is your grandfather?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, in much agitation. "Pray let me go. I am doing no harm."

"Why didn't you stop when we called to you outside?"

"Because I was frightened and wanted to get away."

"So you've come out here on the cliffs to hunt your grandfather at three in the mornin'? That's a very pretty story, miss."

"It's the truth. What else would bring me here?" she said, earnestly.

"I know your grandfather, and it strikes me he seems well able to look out for himself if he is an old man. He's always round these diggin's lookin' for anythin' the sea throws up after a gale, but I don't think he finds a whole lot that's worth cartin' off. One of these fine nights he'll disappear suddenly, for it's my opinion he knows too much for his own good."

He spoke significantly, and the girl trembled at his words.

"You wouldn't harm my grandfather? He's only a poor old man who finds pleasure on the shore. I wish he would stay at home, but he won't," she said.

"You made a great mistake by not stayin' home yourself."

"I will go home if you will release me," she said, earnestly.

"No; I think I'll use you as a bait to draw old Caleb out of his hole; and when we have got him," with a chuckle, "I'll decide what is to be done with you."

"You shall not do any such thing. I see what your purpose is. You mean harm to my grandfather. You shall not touch him as long as I can defend him."

"Ho, ho! What a brave little sparrow you are! Well, I say you shall come with us to the caverns above, d'ye undersand?"

"I will not," she cried firmly.

"Here, Watling, lay hold of this rebellious piece of crinoline. We'll drag her up whether she wishes to go or not."

"You shall not. Help! help!"

"Shall not, eh? I'll see. If you utter another squeal I'll blow your head off," cried Rickards, threateningly.

"I don't think you will. Let that girl go," cried Jack Greeley, stepping out into sight and leveling the revolver at Rickards he always carried for protection.

The two men started back in consternation, for the moment mistaking the brave boy for a revenue officer.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCRAP IN THE CAVERN.

The girl, taking advantage of her captors' surprise, sprang away from them and darted over behind her plucky young defender.

"Who are you?" demanded Rickards, recovering his nerve.

"Jack Greeley," replied the boy, calmly.

"What!" exclaimed the man in astonishment, raising the lantern and flashing the light on the young trader. "So it is you? What in thunder brings you here? When I saw you an hour ago you were sound asleep in the barn."

"And I should have been sound asleep there yet if you had not come and awakened me by flashing your lantern in my face," replied Jack.

Rickards uttered an imprecation under his breath.

"You haven't answered my question. What caused you to come here?"

"Curiosity to explore these caverns."

"Humph! A strange time you take to do it."

"How came you to learn about these caves, and why did you want to explore them?"

"I decline to answer your questions. Just take your hand away from your hip pocket, or something might happen that you wouldn't like. I'm not taking any chances with men who are such cowardly ruffians as to treat an unprotected young lady the way I saw you do."

"What's that, you young imp? Call us cowardly ruffians!" cried Rickards, angrily. "Take care—you are but one, and a boy at that, while we are two, and both of us are armed."

"I don't care if there are two of you. If either of you attempt to draw a weapon on me, if there still remain two of you it will be because I can't shoot straight," replied Jack, in a resolute tone.

"You think you have the drop on us, but you'll find your mistake as soon as my pardner shows up," said Rickards.

"Much obliged for the information. This young lady and I won't wait for your partner to turn up. Come, miss, we'll get out of this place before things get more strenuous for us. The rocks on this side of the entrance lead to a path that communicates with the caverns above. If these men try to stop us there'll be something doing," said Jack.

The boy kept his eye on the two rascals, and his revolver ready for instant action, as he spoke.

"Precede me, miss," he said. "I'll follow."

"Stop!" roared Rickards. "If either of you attempt to leave this cavern you do so at the risk of your life."

"That's a risk we'll take, but I doubt if it's a greater one than you will take if you try to stop us."

"Douse the glim, and then we'll spring apart and fire at them. They'll offer a fair mark against the openin', while we'll be in the dark," whispered Watling to his companion.

The girl moved up the rocks, and Jack backed after her.

Rickards, acting on his associate's suggestion, flung the lantern on the sand, yards away, and he and his companion separated.

Jack understood the dodge too late to shoot with any effect; but he knew the men would shoot in a moment, and he dropped on the rocks to save himself just as their revolvers opened a cross-fire on him.

The girl, with a scream, darted for the opening and disappeared.

Both bullets passed over Jack's head, and he fired in the direction of the flash of Rickards' pistol.

The ball slightly wounded the man on the arm, and he uttered a loud imprecation.

Jack then quickly changed his position.

It was lucky he did so, for two bullets splintered the stones on which he had just been crouching.

At that moment another man came running into the cavern.

"Hello, what's the trouble here?" he shouted.

Jack took advantage of the moment to crawl further up toward the opening.

His retreat was not observed as the rocks hid his figure in the darkness.

He could not be seen till he brought his body into the lighter background of the entrance.

Rickards and Watling both believed he was crouching down closer to them to avoid being shot.

"We've got a young spy cornered on these rocks," said Rickards in answer to the hail of Mark Noakes, for it was he who had appeared on the scene. "Get out your gun and we'll make short work of him."

Jack fired in the direction of the voice, and under cover of the discharge made a rush for the opening.

Rickards and Watling had each sought the shelter of a boulder, and they fired at Jack's retreating figure the moment they saw it outlined against the sky, for the mist had passed away.

One bullet rebounded from a rock, the other bored a hole through the sleeve of the boy's jacket.

The shooting was almost certain to attract the attention of the coast-guard, but the smugglers' allies didn't seem to care.

The fact was they could leave the cavern very quickly by a secret exit into the place where they had a considerable quantity of liquor stored, and they did not fear pursuit.

By the time the smoke of their revolvers had lifted, the boy had disappeared from their sight and was bounding up the path after the girl to the cavern above.

She was waiting for him in great anxiety at the top, fearful that he had been either killed or wounded in her defense.

When she saw him coming she uttered a little cry of relief.

The fog was almost wholly gone by this time, leaving sea and sky visible.

A cool breeze was blowing in from the ocean, gently ruffling the surface of the broad Atlantic.

"Come, miss, we must get away from here as fast as we can," said Jack, hurriedly. "Those chaps are likely to follow us, as they have the advantage of numbers."

"Where shall we hide?" she asked tremulously.

"We won't hide. We must leave these caverns by the back way."

"Then you know a way out?"

"Yes, if I don't go wrong in the darkness. Come!"

"My poor grandfather!" she said, hesitating. "He is somewhere about these caves. If they find him I fear they will kill him."

"He is not up here, miss."

"Are you sure?" she answered, earnestly.

"Yes. He is down in the cave we just left."

"Down where they are! Oh, heavens!"

"Hiding at the back. He could not help seeing and hearing all that happened, and will look out for himself, I am sure. At any rate, we can't help him."

The girl, however, seemed loath to leave, for all her interests centered in her grandfather.

"Oh, why does he come here so often when he must know this place is frequented by those dreadful men?" she said.

"I never saw your grandfather till to-night, but it's easy for me to guess why he comes here," said Jack. "I should think you'd know, too, as you live with him, and should be familiar with his habits."

"I know he comes to hunt for anything that might be washed ashore," she admitted. "There is no reason that he should do so, for he has means to live without seeking the flotsom of the sea. These caverns, however, have a strange fascination for him, particularly at night, in spite of my remonstrances. I am unable to prevent him from coming here, though most of his trips seem to yield nothing worth the trouble and risk he takes."

Jack finally persuaded her to accompany him back by the route he had entered the cliffs.

"What is your name, miss?" he asked as they moved along.

"Jessie Stone."

"Your grandfather's name is Caleb Stone?"

"Yes."

"You live near these cliffs, I suppose?"

"Yes, in a small cottage on the outskirts of the town almost at the foot of the cliffs."

"My name is Jack Greeley. I'm a stranger in this locality, as you probably have guessed. I'm a traveling trader, and was proceeding from Portland toward Bath by stages, stopping at a village or a farm-house on my way, when I mistook my route and drove down here. I put up at the house of a man named Rickards for the night. My horse is now in his barn, and my wagon outside. He gave me a bed on the hay in the loft, and there I still would be but that something happened."

Jack told her how he had been awakened by the presence of Rickard and a companion in the loft, the conversation he had heard between them, and his resolution to follow them to the caverns and try and learn their secret in order to win the Government reward.

"The man who grabbed you and threatened you was

Rickards, and when I interfered to save you, he recognized me, so you see I'm up against it in a way."

"It was very good and brave of you to come to my aid," she said, gratefully.

"That's all right. You don't suppose I was going to stand by and see them use you roughly if I could help it. I'm not built that way."

"You might have been killed or badly wounded."

"Well, I took those chances, and would go it again under the same circumstances."

"I hope you will understand that I am very grateful to you," the girl said earnestly.

"You are welcome. Hist! I am sure I heard voices ahead of us. We must hide somewhere, for it would not be well for us to be discovered."

He drew her behind a boulder.

In a few minutes the gloom was faintly illuminated by the light from a couple of lanterns.

They heard the steps of men coming toward them.

"They must be somewhere in these caverns," they heard a voice say. "At any rate, they have not passed us."

"I guess they're hidin' in the outer cave, watchin' their chance to get away along the shore as soon as the tide gets lower so that they can round the Point," replied a voice that Jack recognized as Rickards.

"The boy is not familiar with the shore, but the girl will act as his guide. You made a mistake, Rickards, in giving that lad a night's lodging," said the other.

"I think the mistake was made in visitin' him in the loft."

He told me that the light awakened him. Doubtless he then overheard our talk, and knowin' somethin' about this liquor business, and havin' heard, no doubt, that there was a reward for information leadin' to the capture of the people engaged in it, he followed us, hopin' to learn our secret."

"Well, he hasn't learned it, and is not likely to," said the other, who was Mark Noakes, the leading spirit of the smugglers' allies. "If we catch him he'll know less."

"It is too bad he butted into our affairs. Had he remained ignorant of these matters we might have sent those tubs to Flint in his wagon. He never would have been suspected, and the consignment would have reached our agent."

"Well, that can't be helped now. We'll have to shut down for awhile until we have thrown the dust into the eyes of the Government agents. I have a scheme for getting one more load to Bath."

"What is it?"

"I'll let you know later. We have enough at present on our hands."

The two men had passed the concealed ones and were now out of hearing, their lanterns flashing in the distance.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY AND OUT.

"They're out of the way now, so we can safely go on," said Jack, taking the girl by the hand and leading her along.

"I was foolish to venture here to-night; but I love my grandfather and would dare anything for his sake," she said.

"Have you ever come after him before?"

"Yes, but not at such a late hour."

"You could not have been aware of the risks you ran. Yet you must have known that there was a chance of your meeting with one or more of these rascals who are being hunted by the revenue people," said Jack.

"I thought of nothing but my grandfather," she replied.

"You are a plucky girl, and a good one. I am glad I was able to do you a service."

Dark as it was, Jack led the way without hesitation.

He told Jessie how he had first come on her grandfather, shuffling along with a lantern in his hand.

"It seems probable that he entered these caverns by the entrance we are making for, and afterwards went off into some inner cave. I wouldn't be surprised if he is trying to earn the Government reward, too. If he is, he's taking desperate chances. He's such a feeble old fellow that he'd stand no show of standing those rascals off if they came on him. You must try and dissuade him from coming here till those chaps have been caught."

"If I only could, but my pleadings have no effect on him," she answered. "He will have his own way. He is very stubborn on that point. It is too bad, for I don't know what I should do if anything happened to him. I should be all alone in the world," and she commenced to cry.

"There, there, Miss Stone; cheer up. There is always a silver lining to every cloud. Let us hope that your grandfather will live for a long time yet. I dare say he is stronger in vitality than he appears to be. Some old men last a long time, and dance over the graves, so to speak, of far younger men."

"I hope grandfather will live a long time," she replied.

"We ought to be close to the back entrance now," said Jack. "A few minutes more and we'll be in the open air."

As he spoke a lantern was suddenly flashed in their faces, dazzling their eyes.

"Trapped! Ha, ha, ha!" laughed an exultant voice. "Throw up your hands, young fellow, or I'll put a bullet into your hide."

Jessie uttered a scream.

The man who faced them put a whistle to his lips and blew a shrill blast that echoed through the caverns, while he held a revolver pointed at the boy's head.

The rascal then took up the lantern he had laid on a stone and commanded the fugitives to back up against the stone wall near the entrance.

Jack dared make no attempt to reach for his own weapon, for his captor had him dead to rights, while the girl clung to him in terror.

"Thought you could slip out by the back door, eh?" chuckled Watling. "We suspected you might make the attempt, so I waited here to catch you in case you were not nabbed in the front cavern."

"Well, now you've got us, what are you going to do with us?" asked Jack, coolly.

"That's for Noakes to say," returned the man. "He's

the boss of this roost. I guess he'll pickle you both for givin' us so much trouble."

"He wouldn't dare harm this innocent girl. What has she done to you? Hasn't she a right to come here after her grandfather?" said Jack.

"Not at this hour of the mornin'. I calculate her errand isn't as innocent as you think. However, that's nothin' to me. I ain't runnin' things. I can swear that you didn't come here lookin' for your grandfather. Haw, haw, haw!"

"You're a nice lot of scoundrels!" replied Jack. "Smuggling liquor seems to be the least of the crimes you are capable of. You'll see your finish before long or I'm no prophet."

"You'd better shut up, for you're only wastin' your breath. You may need it all before the sun rises," said Watling, significantly.

Further remarks were interrupted by a whistle down the passage.

Watling answered it, and soon Noakes and Rickards appeared.

"Got 'em, have you?" said Rickards, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Yes. They just walked into my clutches, and I nabbed them."

"Good."

"Take care of the girl and we'll look after this slippery youth," said Mark Noakes.

The speaker and Rickards threw themselves on Jack and bore him to the ground.

Taking a piece of cord from his pocket, Noakes bound the boy's wrists together behind his back.

Then they yanked him on his feet.

While they were thus engaged, Watling held Jessie and gagged her cries with a handkerchief.

"Now fetch them along," said Noakes.

Jack and the girl were led back into the caverns.

They passed through them in turn till they reached the first one, with its opening on the sea.

Noakes looked out and scanned the beach in the cold light of the stars.

"Not a soul in sight. We are safe from discovery. The tide is going out, however, and it is possible we may have the revenue people nosing around before dawn. Well, let them come. They will have their trouble for nothing."

He motioned his companions to follow with Jack and Jessie.

Down the path he strode, keeping his eyes on the alert, and his ears as well.

Reaching the opening of the lower cavern he paused with one hand on the rocks and listened for sounds within.

He did not expect to find anyone there, but never neglected any precautions.

Hearing nothing suspicious, he entered, and the others came after him.

Jack and Jessie were led to the back of the place, close to the spot where the boy had an hour or so before dragged the small trunk and left it in the hands of old Caleb.

"Stand guard over them, Watling, till Rickards and I decide what we'll do with them," said Noakes.

That rascal and his companion then walked away, and presently were lost to sight somewhere in the place.

Watling placed his lantern on a rock where it would cast its light on the prisoners.

Then he took out his pipe, filled and lighted it, and seating himself on another rock, faced the boy and girl, smoked away at his ease.

He was a hard looking fellow, with a long scar upon his right cheek that did not add to his beauty.

Jack looked at the girl, and the woe-begone look on her face enlisted all his sympathy.

He left more for her than he did for himself, though he could not believe that the rascals would handle her as harshly as their manner implied.

What they would do to him he could not possibly guess.

Suddenly Jack's attention was riveted to the rock on which stood the lantern.

Something appeared to be crawling up on it.

What it was he could not tell, but that it was alive was proved by its creeping movements.

A moment or two later he drew in his breath with a thrill of wonder.

It was not a crawling reptile, as he had supposed, but a human hand—long and skinny, like the talons of a bird of prey.

The moving hand naturally suggested the presence of its owner behind the rock.

Quick as a flash he thought of old Caleb Stone.

It must be he who was concealed there.

What was he trying to do?

The answer came almost immediately.

The hand suddenly darted forward and the lantern fell over with a crash.

Watling sprang to his feet with an imprecation.

He supposed the lantern had fallen of its own accord.

As he stooped to pick it up a shadow rose from behind the rock, something swished through the air, and Jack saw a dark object strike Watling on the head.

With a groan he rolled over, either dead or unconscious.

Then the shadow stepped into sight and picked up the lantern which had not been extinguished.

It was old Caleb, sure enough.

He replaced the lantern on the stone and turned to the prisoners, tearing the gag from his grandchild's mouth first of all.

"Oh, grandfather!" cried the girl, almost hysterically.

"Cut us loose, quick, before those other rascals return," said Jack, seeing a knife in the old man's hand.

Old Caleb, evidently alive to the emergency, lost no time in words, but hastened to do that very thing.

Inside of a minute Jack was free, while the girl was crying in her grandfather's arms.

The boy's first move was to get possession of Watling's revolver, and to recover his own as well, which the rascal had taken from him.

His weapon was a small one, while Watling's was a heavy weapon.

"Here, take this revolver, Miss Stone," he said, handing her his own. "Now we'll be able to protect ourselves if those scoundrels bar our escape from this cavern. Let us get away at once."

"Yes, yes," said the old man, "but you must help me carry that trunk."

"Oh, hang the trunk; it will embarrass us," said Jack impatiently.

But Caleb Stone wouldn't hear of leaving it behind.

"It's a piece of foolhardiness to try to get that thing out of here in face of the peril we are up against," said Jack, appealing to the girl.

"Leave it here, grandfather," said Jessie, earnestly.

"No, no; I shall lose it. Those rascals will find it when morning comes. If you won't help me with it, I'll drag it out alone," said the old man, doggedly.

There was no use arguing the matter with him.

It was quite beyond his strength to drag it far, but there was no doubt but that he would try to do it, and probably sacrifice all their chances of escape, for Jessie wouldn't leave him behind, and Jack would not abandon either.

The only thing to do was for Jack to expedite matters by grabbing the trunk and pulling it toward the entrance himself.

Old Caleb tried to help him, but his assistance amounted to nothing.

Jack dragged the trunk with one hand and held the revolver with the other, ready for business.

Jessie also held the other revolver cocked for action, but whether she would use it with any effect in case the rascals blocked their way, was a question.

As they neared the opening, Jack looked cautiously around in the gloom, but there was no sign of the two men whose appearance they dreaded.

Reaching the foot of the rocky ascent, Caleb and the girl both took hold of the back handle of the trunk to help the boy with his burden.

They arrived at the path outside without molestation, and Jack breathed easier.

By degrees they carried the trunk to the cavern above, and once more a start was made for the back entrance to the cliffs.

Part of the time Jack dragged the trunk alone, for they got on faster that way.

Only for the gratitude he felt toward the old man for assisting them to escape from their critical predicament, he would have insisted on abandoning the burden, for in his opinion the trunk was not worth the trouble of carrying it off.

Finally they reached their goal without further adventure, and then Jack tried to persuade old Caleb to leave the trunk in a thick bunch of bushes outside the entrance, where he assured him it would remain safe enough till he came for it later.

The old man wouldn't have it, and so they had to sit down and rest before resuming their way.

Jack wondered how he would be able to get possession of his horse, locked up as it was in Rickards' barn.

It is true he could go on to town and secure the services of a constable to help him out; but before resorting to that he determined to break into the barn himself if the coast remained clear.

When he stated the difficulty to Jessie and her grandfather, the old man said he'd help him get his horse and wagon.

Dawn was breaking in the east when they came out of the defile on to the cliff side.

The house occupied by Rickards, and presumably the others as well, was in plain sight a few hundred yards away.

Toward it they made their way, the old man and Jack carrying the trunk between them, the girl relieving her grandfather at intervals.

Posting Jessie at the corner of the barn to keep watch up the cliff side in the direction of the defile, Jack and old Caleb began operations on the barndoor.

Success attended their efforts, and they soon forced the fastening and Jack got his horse out.

He was harnessed to the shafts, the trunk loaded into the wagon, and then all being in readiness to leave the place, Jack helped Jessie up on the seat, her grandfather seated himself on the trunk at the back, and the party started for Caleb's cottage on the outskirts of Seaport.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUNG LOVE.

It didn't take long to reach the Stone cottage, which stood off by itself on the cliff side of the town in the midst of a patch of arable ground surrounded by a paling which had once been white, but was now sadly weather-stained, as well as out of repair.

There was a small barn at the back, and old Caleb invited Jack to put his horse in there till he was ready to proceed on his route.

The boy accepted the old man's hospitality, helped him carry the brass-nailed trunk to his room, and then suggested that the police ought to be informed about the treatment that he and Jessie had received at the hands of Rickards and his two associates.

"Time enough for that," replied old Caleb. "They will not run away, though they may go in hiding for awhile. Indeed, finding that you and Jessie have escaped, they have probably already looked to their own safety. We have been up all night. It is well that we take some rest. Jessie will show you to a spare room. It is at your service while you remain with us. Go now; I will see you some hours hence."

The old man shuffled off, and the closing of a door on the floor above was a sign that he had retired to his own room, but whether to sleep or to try and get into the trunk he had, with Jack's aid, saved from the waves, was a question.

"I don't feel particularly sleepy," said Jack to the girl, "but still I dare say I ought to turn in for a few hours, as I haven't anything better to do."

"Perhaps we had better have breakfast first," said Jessie. "It will not take long to get it."

"Just as you say. I'll help you get it."

A light breakfast was prepared, and Jessie went up to see if her grandfather was asleep.

Her taps on his door remaining unanswered, she concluded that he was, and returned to the living-room where she and Jack had the morning meal together.

"I suppose you and your grandfather have lived here some time?" said the boy.

"Yes. I was born in this cottage, which was built by my

father. He was captain and owner of a coasting schooner. Grandfather lived with us, and was company for mother, as father was away from home a large part of his time. We were very happy till a furious storm, lasting two or three days, swept the coast from one end to the other. My father sailed from Boston for Belfast a few hours before it came on. A few days later mother received a letter from him stating that fact. Neither he nor the schooner was ever heard from again, so there was no doubt that he was lost in that fatal gale. Mother never got over the shock of his death, and a year later grandfather buried her in the churchyard."

Jessie ended her sad story with a sob, and Jack gazed at her with deep sympathy.

"Since then grandfather and I have lived here, taking comfort in each other's society. But he is growing old, and though active and healthy for his years, he cannot live many more. What will become of me when—when——"

Her voice broke in tears, and she could not go on.

"Don't look on the dark side of the picture, Miss Jessie," said Jack. "There is no reason why your grandfather should not last ten years more, and that is quite awhile. In my travels I have met a great many old people in this State—older by many years than he. His chances are as good as theirs."

"It is very kind of you to encourage me and I am grateful to you. I try to believe that Death will stay away from our little home, for I should have nothing to live for were grandfather to go."

"But surely you have friends here who have known you from your birth. Among them you would find some who would take an interest in your future."

She shook her head.

"We have none that we can call friends. We have lived such an isolated life that those who know us seldom go out of their way to call. Were grandfather to die, I should not have a friend in the world."

"Then why not let me be your friend? With the exception of an uncle and aunt in Bath; who take no particular interest in me, I myself am alone in the world. I would like to feel that I had some one who would entertain more than a passing regard for me. We have been strangely thrown together. Why should this meeting not result in good to us both? I am bound to say I have taken a strong interest in you, though a few hours ago we were strangers to each other. I feel that you need some one besides your grandfather on whom you could thoroughly depend in a case of need. Let me occupy that position in your thoughts, and in return be to me a true friend, and, shall I say, sister. You will not regret it, for though absent from your side, I will be with you in spirit, and should any unexpected misfortune come to you, you would find me on hand to comfort and help you."

Jack spoke so earnestly and kindly that his words made a great impression on the girl, who had already been drawn to him by his frank and manly deportment, and the plucky way he had come to her aid in the cavern, facing death to save her from ill treatment at the hands of her captors.

As she glanced slyly in his face, her womanly intuition told her that Jack was just such a friend as her maidenly heart had long yearned for, and she did not hesitate to lay her hand in his and thus consent to his proposition.

"A few hours hence I shall be obliged to leave you to continue my route to Bath," he said; "but I will write to you the moment I get there, and I hope I shall find a letter from you awaiting me at the post-office. In this way we can easily keep track of each other, and should you at any time need me, I will come to you at once, no matter in what part of the State I happen to be at the time your request reaches me."

Jessie thanked him with her eyes, and they sat and talked together in quite a confidential way for nearly an hour, when they retired to their rooms for a sleep.

Jack woke up about three o'clock, and finding the house silent, decided to harness Sancho to the wagon, make a short tour of the outskirts of the town, and see if he could do any business.

"No use of neglecting any chances, seeing that I'm in this neighborhood," he told himself. "I've had all the sleep I need for the present, and as Jessie and her grandfather may not be stirring for a couple of hours yet, I can put the time in probably to better advantage than loafing around the cottage."

Accordingly he let himself out into the back yard, led Sancho from the barn, put him into the shafts, drove out into the road and started on a round of the nearest houses.

In the course of the next two hours he did quite a bit of business, and finally returned to the cottage well satisfied with himself.

He found Jessie in the kitchen preparing supper.

She came to the door when he walked his horse into the yard.

"Where have you been?" she asked, with a smile.

"Attending to business," he replied. "Did better around here than I expected. Made more cash sales than usual, and found no difficulty in getting my price."

"How long have you been away?"

"Something over two hours; in fact, nearly three."

"Supper will be ready shortly. Grandfather has gone down to the office of the revenue inspector to tell him about our experience with the men in the caverns this morning."

"Has he? Then it's probable there will be something doing along shore. The caverns will be searched again more carefully than before, and I dare say the officers will take possession of the house I put up at on the cliff road."

Jack put the horse up, watered and fed him, gave him a combing down, and then walked into the kitchen where he found the meal ready.

Old Caleb hadn't got back yet, and they waited for him.

He appeared in company with an officer in the course of twenty minutes, and the Government man questioned Jack and Jessie in turn.

He was joined at the door by two other men in a light wagon, and drove off up the cliff road with them.

"They're bound for the house," said Jack, after noting the direction taken by the officers.

"They won't find any one there now," replied old Caleb, as they sat down to supper; "and I doubt if they'll find any evidence in the place that will warrant them taking possession of it."

"I saw a dozen tubs of fish in the kitchen. Judging from what I heard those rascals say in the barn loft, each

of the tubs contains a hidden quantity of French cognac," said Jack.

"Those tubs have been removed long ago. The men wouldn't be such fools as to leave them in the house to be confiscated and stand as evidence against them," said the old man.

Jack agreed with him.

"If they have removed them it is to their secret storehouse in the cliffs—one of the smaller caverns, probably, whose entrance is known only to themselves. I should think that a systematic search by the officers would reveal its whereabouts."

"The caverns have already been searched without result."

"It would be a fine thing for the revenue men if they could find the cave, for I heard Rickards' companion say they have \$5,000 worth of French brandy concealed there," said Jack.

"Five thousand dollars worth!" exclaimed the old man, running his tongue over his lips. "Half of that would go to the person who gave the Government information that would lead to its seizure. Five thousand!" he repeated, with a gleam of longing in his old eyes.

After that he said no more, but seemed to be thinking. Jack remained that night at the cottage.

He and Jessie spent a very happy evening in each other's company, though the girl's eyes saddened whenever he spoke about his departure in the morning.

He noticed her manner finally, and said:

"You don't like to part with me so soon, do you, Jessie?"

"No," she replied frankly. "I wish you could stay awhile longer."

"I wish I could, too, for your sake, for I've learned to think a lot of you during the short time we've been together. I never met a girl yet that I cared for to any extent, but it's different with you. I seem drawn to you in a strange way, as if—well, as if you were the one girl in all the world that heaven intended me to care for and protect. Do you wish me to feel that way toward you? Do you, Jessie, dear?"

A rich blush suffused her cheeks, and she bent her eyes on the floor.

He accepted that as an encouraging sign, and putting one arm around her waist, drew her unresistingly toward him.

"Jessie, I love you. Do you care for me?" he asked, in a tone that thrilled her to the heart. "Look in my eyes and answer me, dearest."

Instead of doing so she buried her face on his shoulder.

He caressed her hair gently and then lifted her head.

"Do you love me, Jessie?"

"Yes, yes."

"How much?"

"With all my heart. Oh, Jack, must you really leave me in the morning?" she added, throwing her arms about his neck. "I shall be so unhappy after you are gone."

"You must not be unhappy, dear. We will write frequently to each other, and I will return to you at the first chance."

"You won't forget me for some other girl?"

"Never—I swear it!"

Then their lips met in a long, sweet kiss that the girl, at least, never forgot.

CHAPTER VII.

IN JAIL AND OUT.

While Jack, Jessie and old Caleb were at breakfast morning, a revenue officer appeared at the cottage.

"Have you made any captures?" asked the old man.

"No. The house was shut up as tight as wax. We found an entrance, but the tubs of fish you spoke about, my lad, he said, looking at Jack, "were not there."

"They removed them, of course," said Caleb.

"They had plenty of time to do it. Had you notified us early in the morning, at the time you all made your escape, as you should have done, we might have caught the birds with the goods. The chief inspector is not pleased at your dilatory tactics, and it's my opinion he will have something to say to you on the subject."

"I was up all night and too tired when I got home to visit him," explained the old man.

"It seems to me you are too old a man to be hanging around the beach and those caverns at night," said the officer. "Your object may be innocent enough, for we have learned you have been doing it for years—always on the lookout to secure some flotsam from the sea; but let me say plainly that your delay in notifying us about the run-in this young man and your grand-daughter had with the men under suspicion, does not reflect credit on you."

"My grandfather meant well," spoke up Jessie. "He is a very old man, and you must have consideration for him."

"That's all right, miss, but he still has his wits about him as well as any of us. If he was not in a physical condition to attend to so urgent a matter, why did you not bring us the news, young man?" turning to Jack.

"I left the matter to Mr. Stone, as I'm a stranger in this locality," replied Jack.

"But when you saw that the old man here was not attending to the matter, you ought to have known enough to take the duty on your own shoulders. By neglecting to do so you played into the hands of the men you seem so anxious to have captured. Your own conduct in this affair, young man, is not above censure."

"I'm sorry," replied Jack.

"Your sorrow doesn't mend the matter," replied the officer, severely, "and I'm afraid you'll find yourself in trouble over it."

"In trouble!" cried Jack.

The officer nodded.

"I have been instructed to take you and Caleb Stone to the inspector's office. That is my errand here, so if you are through breakfast I'll trouble you both to put on your hats and come with me."

Jessie looked frightened, and tremulously asked what the inspector intended to do with her grandfather and Jack.

"I couldn't tell you, miss, but I suppose he intends to question them sharply."

"I'm ready to go with you. The inspector can't do anything with me, as I have nothing to do with this smuggling matter. I never heard of those rascals till I accidentally ran foul of one of them last night and put up at this house," said Jack. "I supposed he told the truth when he said he was a sort of fisherman-farmer."

"It isn't your story that is doubted, but your delay in furnishing information that is questioned," said the officer. "If you can give a satisfactory explanation you will get out of our trouble."

Fifteen minutes later Jack and old Caleb were in the presence of the district inspector.

Jessie's man was clearly not in a good humor. He put them both through a kind of third degree examination, but could find nothing against them but their failure to notify the Government with the promptness that was expected of them.

"You can go," he said to old Caleb. "Hold on, young man," as Jack was about to follow Jessie and her grandfather. "You're a traveling trader and non-resident. In case we catch these men we're looking for, your testimony will be required. If you leave this neighborhood, we may have trouble in reaching you, so I've got an order from the magistrate which will cause your detention in the hands of the authorities till further notice."

"Do you mean to say I am under arrest?" cried Jack, aghast.

"That's about the size of it! but you will be released if you are able to furnish a bond for your appearance when wanted."

"How can I furnish a bond when I am acquainted with nobody but Caleb Stone and his grand-daughter?" said the boy.

"That is your business, not mine," said the inspector, curtly. "Constable," he said, opening an inner door, "take charge of this young chap. Here is the order which makes you answerable for his appearance when wanted."

Jack started to make an indignant protest, but he was cut short and marched out of the office.

"Are you going to take me to jail?" he asked the constable.

"I calculate I am," replied the officer.

"This is an outrage," cried Jack.

"I'm sorry if it is, but I've got to go according to law. Come along."

Jack was mad clear through, but he couldn't resist and had to accompany the constable.

Old Caleb went along part way with them, and assured the boy he would do what he could to secure his immediate release.

In the course of an hour he appeared before the magistrate, accompanied by Jessie.

As the girl's guardian he said he had come to offer, with her permission, the property that belonged to her as security for Jack's release.

"I can't accept it," replied the magistrate. "You have no legal right to offer your ward's property on a bail bond."

"I was afraid so," replied old Caleb; "but my grand-daughter insisted that I do it."

"She has no say in the matter. You must find other security."

Jessie began to cry.

"You seem interested in the prisoner, young lady," said the magistrate, curiously.

"I am. He saved me from those men last night in the cave, and I am grateful to him. He is the best and bravest boy in the world," she added energetically, "and I think it's a shame that he should be kept in prison when he has committed no crime."

"Well, young lady, I regret that the law leaves me no choice in the matter. As a non-resident of county, it is necessary that he be detained in custody as an important witness for the Government."

"There is no need to keep him a prisoner for that reason," she said. "He can stay with grandfather and I at the cottage as long as necessary."

"Under those conditions, your grandfather, who I believe has been a resident of this place for forty years or more, ought to be able to find somebody who will become responsible for the young man. I can't release him except on bail."

That settled the matter as far as the magistrate was concerned, and so Jessie and her grandfather had to take their leave.

"Grandfather, we must find somebody who will get Jack out," said Jessie, as soon as they were on the street.

"But I don't know any one I could ask," he replied. "My old friends are either dead or have moved away."

"Then I will try. You go home and wait till I return," she said.

Jessie spent several hours in a fruitless endeavor to secure bail for Jack.

No one wanted to go security for a traveling trader.

Giving up at last in despair, she called at the jail and was admitted to see the boy, who was not confined in a regular cell, but in one of the rooms at the top of the building where constables occasionally slept when their presence was required at the building.

Jack being accustomed to a free and untrameled existence, took his confinement hard, and denounced the inspector for his harshness.

"I wish I could get out of here and give the authorities the slip; but if I managed to do it I suppose I'd be pursued and brought back," he said.

Jessie sympathized with him, agreed that his detention was an outrage, and bewailed the futility of her efforts to secure his freedom.

She declared that she would visit the inspector that afternoon and see if she could prevail on him to let Jack out on her solemn promise that he would appear when wanted.

Jessie's visit made Jack more cheerful, and when his dinner was brought to him he ate it with the relish of a hungry boy; but as the long afternoon wore away he grew downhearted again, and after supper became quite desperate at the idea of spending weeks, perhaps, in that room.

Long before dark he had inspected his outside surroundings, and found that the window, which was not secured with bars, was so high above the ground that to risk a drop from it would surely result in broken bones if not in a broken head or neck.

He saw, however, that a gutter ran the length of the building, under the eaves; that it was within easy reach, and that if he dared trust his weight to it, it would be pos-

sible to reach the corner building, which was a story lower than the jail.

From the roof of that building an adjacent shed could be gained, and then escape by way of a rear alley would be easy.

The more he thought the matter over the more he was tempted to take the risk.

It required good nerve and strong muscles, too, but Jack had both at his command.

The only thing that deterred him was the fact that the gutter might not be strong enough to stand the strain.

If it gave under him he would be dashed to the stone yard below, and that meant death or serious bodily injury.

After dark he stood for an hour at the window considering the matter.

Finally he shoved down the upper sash, stood on a chair, and, reaching for the gutter, tried to test its powers of resistance.

It seemed to be strong above the window, and at length he nerved himself to make the venture.

"If I notice a weakness as I proceed, no doubt I'll be able to make my way back," he thought.

So he got out of the window and started on his perilous journey under the eaves, three stories above the ground.

Nine times out of ten true pluck wins out, and it did on this occasion.

Jack reached the roof of the house adjoining the jail without accident.

A moment later he sprang upon the shed, and in less than we can record the fact he was making his way through the alley to the street.

Seaport was only a small town, and Jack had no difficulty in determining the direction in which the ocean and the cliffs lay.

His purpose was to reach the Stone cottage, see Jessie, bid her good-by, and get out of the place with his horse and wagon.

As soon as he got a short distance from the jail, he felt pretty safe, for he had little fear that any citizen of the town would recognize him as a fugitive from the lock-up.

He hurried along as fast as he thought advisable until he got away from the more populated parts, and then he went on as rapidly as possible.

Inside of twenty minutes he came in sight of the cottage.

There was a light in Jessie's room, and picking up some gravel, Jack tossed it at the window panes.

The rattle naturally attracted the girl's attention, and she opened the window and looked out.

"Come down, Jessie," he called.

"Jack!" she screamed joyfully. "Have they let you go?"

She rushed downstairs, threw open the back door and sprang into his arms.

"I'm so glad they let you out, dear," she said, after he had kissed her.

"They didn't let me out. I escaped."

"You escaped! How?"

"I haven't time to tell you now. I must harness up my team and get away from here post haste. I don't want to be caught and taken back. The police probably wouldn't

treat me so well for taking French leave. They may catch me anyhow, but I mean to give them a run for it."

Jessie was astonished and not a little nervous to know that he had broken out of the jail, for officers were sure to follow him, and he could hardly expect to evade them.

She helped him harness Sancho up, and then with a hasty embrace and several kisses, he drove out of the yard and took the cliff road so as not to pass through the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN THAT JACK PICKED UP.

When half way between the cottage and the house which had been occupied by Rickards and his companions, a man sprang into the middle of the road.

Jack thought it was a constable detailed to recapture him, and he slashed at Sancho with the end of the reins to make the animal break into a run.

The man in the road was too quick for him, and catching the horse by the bridle, brought him to a rest by main strength.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" demanded Jack.

"My name is Smith, and I want you to give me a lift," was the reply.

"A ride, eh? Where do you want to go?" asked Jack, still suspecting that the man was an officer.

"To the county road where I calculate you're bound."

"Well, jump in," said Jack, who felt that the man had the best of the situation as things stood.

His purpose was to drive on if he could the moment the chap released his horse's head and came toward the wagon.

Whether the man suspected his intention or not he was foxy enough not to take any chances of getting left.

He made a grab at the reins and got hold of them.

That upset Jack's plan.

He maintained his hold on the lines till he reached the wagon and sprang in, then he released them.

"Now you can drive on, young fellow," he said. "I was afraid maybe you'd leave me in the lurch if I didn't prevent you, that's why I seized your reins."

The fellow's voice sounded familiar to Jack, but though the boy looked keenly at him as he took his seat beside him, he didn't remember having seen him before.

"Whereabouts on the county road are you going?" asked Jack, as he started his horse on again.

"To the Wheatsheaf Inn."

"And where may that be?"

"Ten mile from here by the route that you're thinking of goin', but less than half that distance by the short cut I will point out to you."

"You know of a short cut to the county road, then?"

"I do, and I expect you to take it."

"That suits me. I can't get off the cliff road any quicker."

"I see we shall get on well together, young fellow. You were lucky to meet me, for I shall save you six miles of less drivin', and that's as good as an hour I've added to your life," and the speaker chuckled.

As they came in sight of the house at which Jack had

put up at, his companion pointed to a break in the shrubbery that lined the road and directed him to turn off there.

"If it was daylight you'd see wagon tracks. As I've been over the ground before, and you haven't, you'd better let me drive. I'll take the rig through all right," said the man.

Jack had no objection to his driving, and let him have the reins.

They went on till they came to a thick clump of bushes, when the man stopped.

"What's the matter?" asked Jack.

"I've got a barrel full of rubbish here I want to put on your wagon," replied the man.

"A barrel full of rubbish!"

"Yes; get down and give me a lift."

Jack got down and gave him a hand with the barrel, which they pulled out of the thickest part of the shrubbery.

It appeared to be full of old truck of no particular value, and Jack wondered that his companion should want to carry it with him.

He also wondered how it came to be there.

An overturned wheelbarrow seemed to indicate how it got there.

"You're a travelin' trader," grinned the man; "what would you give for this barrel as it stands?"

"I wouldn't give much. In fact, from what I see of its contents I don't think it would pay to lumber up my wagon with it. It's rather heavy, though. What is in it besides this truck that I see?"

"A house and lot and enough gold to start a bank," laughed the man.

"Yes, I guess so," chuckled Jack. "I'll give you a quarter for it and take the chances of finding the house and lot and the gold when I dump it out."

"I don't think I'll take your offer. Jump in and we'll start on again."

In the course of an hour they reached the county road, and fifteen minutes later came in sight of the Wheatsheaf Inn.

"Drive into the yard, young man," said Jack's passenger, when they came to the hostelry.

Jack did so and then reined in.

"Where do you want your barrel dumped out?" he asked.

"Let it remain in the wagon. I'm goin' further along the road in the mornin'," replied Smith.

"If you are you'll have to take charge of your barrel now, for I'm not going to stop here," replied the boy.

"You're not, eh? Where do you expect to put up for the night if not here?"

"In some field if I don't reach a house inside of a couple hours where I can stop."

"Well, there isn't any house at which you could stop this side of Bristol village, and that's eight miles off. There is no sense of you goin' on till mornin'. You've done me a favor, and I'll pay your expenses. Here, John," he said to an attache of the inn, "take charge of this nag and put him in the stable. Water him and hand him out a supply of oats. Now, young man, we'll go inside and see if we can scare up some supper."

Jack rather reluctantly got down and followed his new companion.

He wasn't anxious to put up at the Wheatsheaf, even if it cost him nothing, for he was afraid that before morning a constable from Seaport would be on hand to take him back to the jail from which he had made his escape.

It didn't occur to him that an officer would hardly expect to find a cheap trader like himself enjoying the hospitality of a public inn.

The party by the name of Smith, however, had such an insistent way of doing things to suit himself that Jack felt obliged to follow his lead.

As a matter of fact, Jack had begun to realize that he had probably done a foolish thing in leaving the jail after having been sent there on a magistrate's order, and he feared he had entailed serious consequences on himself.

As an important witness, the most he had been up against was the curtailment of his liberty, but now he had laid himself open to being treated like a criminal.

If followed and taken back to Seaport, he would be put in a cell, brought before the magistrate and punished with imprisonment for breaking out of his place of temporary confinement.

"I guess I've made a fool of myself," he thought, and that reflection made him nervous and less independent in his actions.

The party by the name of Smith seemed to be well acquainted with the landlord of the inn.

Stepping up to the bar, he asked Jack what he would have.

"Nothing," replied the boy. "I don't drink."

"Not a drinker, eh? Well, take a soda, or sarsaparilla, or some grape juice, just to be sociable, you know," said Smith.

Jack was prevailed on to accept a glass of soda.

Then he sat down and looked over a Seaport newspaper while his companion talked over the bar in a low tone with the landlord.

In the course of half an hour a man appeared and said supper was waiting for them.

It was nearly eleven o'clock then.

Jack wasn't hungry, but he went into the dining-room with Smith, as he could not well refuse the invitation, and managed to do fair justice to a plate of bacon and eggs and a cup of coffee.

By the time they were through the inn was closed for the night, and Smith and Jack were shown to adjoining rooms on the top floor.

Smith left orders that they were to be called just before daylight, and at that hour Jack was aroused by a pounding on his door.

"Hello, what's wanted?" he asked, sitting up in bed and seeing that it was still dark.

"Time to get up," replied a man's voice.

"Get up!" cried Jack. "Why it isn't daylight yet."

He jumped out of bed and peered from the window. Everything was dark outside.

While he looked he saw a man come out in the yard with a lantern and move towards the stable.

In a few moments he led Sancho out and started to harness him to the wagon.

That was enough for Jack, and he hurried into his clothes.

Before he was through dressing another knock came on his door.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"Smith. Most ready?"

"Yes. Are we to start so early?"

"It will be daylight by the time we're through with breakfast, and I'm in a hurry to get on," was the reply.

"All right," answered Jack.

To say the truth, he was in a hurry himself to get as far away from Seaport as he could before his escape was discovered and pursuit started.

He was afraid, however, that he stood little chance of getting clean off.

It was broad daylight by the time they mounted the seat of the wagon, and Jack started on.

He judged that he was not likely to do any business that day, as his object at present was to cover as much ground as possible, and in order to do that he could not afford to stop on the road.

As they drove along, Smith asked him about his business, and how he carried it on.

Jack told him.

"Now look here, young man, if you'll cut out business for to-day, and just drive straight ahead, I'll pay you double whatever you figure out you might lose by the arrangement. That's fair, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied Jack, who was not averse to such a bargain.

In fact, he would have made it anyway, even if he had no fear of a constable at his heels.

"You wouldn't clear five dollars, would you?" asked Smith.

"No, unless I was uncommonly lucky."

"Well, I'll give you ten, and pay you in advance, so you'll know where you stand," said his companion. "I'll also pay all expenses, and if I fail to overtake some friends of mine who are ahead, I'll make the same deal with you for tomorrow."

"All right," agreed Jack, well pleased with the offer.

He couldn't make ten or perhaps twenty dollars easier, and at the same time get over the ground at a pace that suited him.

Of course, if a pursuing constable overtook him he was likely to lose the money, while his passenger would be put in a somewhat embarrassing predicament.

When the man handed him the \$10 bill he thought it only right to tell him how the case stood.

Smith heard him with a wicked kind of grin.

"So you broke out of the Seaport jail, eh, where they locked you up as a witness?" he said. "How did you do it?"

Jack explained how he had left the room at the top of the building by way of the gutter pipe.

"You're a nervy lad; but that ain't more'n I'd expect of you after——"

He stopped suddenly as Jack looked at him in surprise.

"What were you going to say?" Jack asked.

"I was going to say I'd expect you'd do such a risky thing from the look of your face," replied Smith, scratching his red whiskers. "You've got sand, you have, and you ought to get along in the world."

"I hope to," replied Jack, with his eyes on his companion's red whiskers.

For the first time it struck the boy that they didn't look natural.

When Smith scratched them they seemed to work about in an odd way not common with whiskers in general.

"I wonder if they're false," thought the boy, "and if so, why?"

"You're afraid maybe a constable will be sent after you to bring you back," said Smith.

"I think it's likely."

"I think so, too; but if there's only one, I don't see any reason why he should take you back."

"It would only make things worse for me if I resisted. Besides, he would be armed and able to enforce his command."

"I calculate he would; but as it wouldn't suit me at all to have to go back to Wheatsheaf Inn, in case he came up with us before we struck Bristol village, I'd feel bound to help you stand him off," said Smith, in a tone that indicated he was in earnest.

"Why, you'd only get into trouble for interfering in my behalf. He'd arrest you, too."

"Yes, I calculate he would—if he could," chuckled Smith.

"I wouldn't advise you to make any demonstration on my behalf. It wouldn't be fair for me to get you into a hole."

"Don't you worry about me, young man. However, we won't cross a bridge till we come to it. As you haven't committed any crime, the Seaport police may not bother about your escape."

"But breaking out of jail is a kind of offense, isn't it?"

"You wasn't a regular prisoner, and you had the right to get away if you could."

"I don't believe that excuse would hold water before the magistrate if I'm taken back."

"Well, you can do as you please, but if I were in your shoes no constable would take me back to town, particularly if I had a good friend beside me who was willin' to see me through."

Jack made no reply.

He didn't want to make trouble for himself in Seaport, for he intended to return there before long anyway to see Jessie.

He couldn't understand why his companion seemed to be so ready to butt into the matter and help him stand off an officer of the law.

Smith didn't look like a fool, and nobody but a fool would look for trouble.

The more he thought about it the more he became suspicious of his new companion, and this suspicion was strengthened by the man's whiskers.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONSTABLE FROM SEAPORT.

After a two-hour drive they entered the village of Bristol, and Smith, taking the reins, guided the rig to the drug-store, which was also the post-office.

"I'll only be a minute," he said as he got down.

He entered the store, and Jack, glancing in, saw him in conversation with a small man behind the counter.

The man went behind his prescription desk, and in a few minutes brought Smith a small, flat flask, which he put in his pocket.

They were soon on the county road again, with Sancho putting his best foot forward.

A farm-house loomed up ahead.

Neither Jack nor his companion paid any attention to it.

Not so Sancho.

He was so accustomed to stopping at farm-houses that he never failed to turn off toward the nearest gate that led up to one.

He did so on this occasion of his own accord and stopped before a wide gate beyond which lay a long lane.

"Hello!" cried Smith, "you aren't goin' in there?"

"No. My horse did that himself. He's used to going up lanes when we come to them," replied Jack, backing the animal into the road again, and starting him along the road.

Sancho shook his head vigorously several times, as if he thought something was wrong, and then got down to work again.

"You wouldn't have done any business at that house if you'd gone there for that purpose," remarked Smith.

"How do you know I wouldn't?" asked Jack.

"Because old miser Ogden lives there, with his skin-flint wife. They'd have set their dogs on you and chased you off the place."

"You seem to be pretty well acquainted along this road."

"Yes. I know pretty nearly all the farmers along the line. I have no use for Ogden, though."

"What's your business?"

"I'm an insurance agent, and a drummer of side lines," replied Smith.

Somehow Jack doubted his statement.

The longer he was in Smith's company the more curious he grew as to his real identity.

He had already come to the conclusion that his name wasn't really Smith.

Somehow or another he believed he had met the man somewhere before, but he couldn't place him.

"Maybe I'd recollect him if I saw him without his red sidewhiskers," he said to himself. "If they aren't false I'm not a good guesser. I wonder where he's going? First he told me his destination was the Wheatsheaf Inn; but it is clear he only intended to stop there for the night. I would like to know why he's interested in that old barrel of refuse on the wagon. Seems to me there's something more in it than meets the eye. Can it be the fellow is a crook and has plunder hidden in it? That would account for his disguise. I don't fancy the idea of assisting a burglar to get away with his swag, as they call it. Yet he can't be a burglar, either, for he is well acquainted along this route. I'll have to give it up. He's a mystery to me."

They met and passed several teams along the road, and in most every case Smith exchanged friendly gestures with the drivers.

Jack noticed that they all eyed him with a look of interest, which at first he set down to the fact that he was

a stranger in that neighborhood, but he began to take a different view of it as they proceeded.

At nine o'clock they passed through another village, but not without stopping, for Smith seemed to have business with the proprietor of the tavern, which went by the name of the Moose Hotel.

Owing to the anti-liquor law intoxicating drinks were not publicly dispensed over the bar, but anybody almost in the village could fill his private demijohn here, or crook his elbow on the quiet in a small room off the bar.

Nothing was sold over the bar but cider, grape juice and various soft drinks.

Smith and the proprietor adjourned to the little room, where they had a short talk and a drink together, after which the man with the red whiskers returned to the wagon, and the rig went on.

Before they struck the next village, Sancho made several attempts to turn off at farm gates, but being headed off each time, he gave it up and paid no further attention to the farm-houses they subsequently passed, thereby demonstrating that he was no fool if he was a horse.

It was close on to noon and they were drawing near another collection of houses which Smith said represented Plympton village, when Jack, happening to turn his head, saw a light buggy rapidly approaching with a man in it.

He instinctively suspected that this was a Seaport constable.

"There's a man and a buggy following us at a rapid rate," he said to his companion. "It may be a constable after me."

Smith turned around and looked.

Then he looked ahead and seemed to be calculating.

"Rein in and we'll let him pass," he said.

"If he's a constable he won't pass," replied Jack.

"No, I don't think he will," and Smith chuckled in a peculiar way. "Stop, I'm going to get out. Drive to one side and give the party room to get by."

Jack had got accustomed to doing whatever Smith directed him to do, for the man always spoke as if he expected his orders to be carried out, though he never addressed the boy otherwise than in a pleasant way.

As soon as Smith got down he went to the rear of the vehicle, and began to take a strong interest in one of the hind wheels, as if there was something the matter with it.

"Anything the matter with the wheel?" asked Jack, surprised at his action.

Smith didn't answer him, but transferred his scrutiny to the hub.

In a few minutes the man and the buggy came up with a rush and a cloud of dust.

He hauled in and stopped opposite Jack's rig.

"I think your name is Jack Greeley?" he said, sharply.

"That's what it is," replied the boy. "What do you want?"

"You."

"What do you want with me?"

"You've got to return to Seaport with me, young man. I'm a constable. You slipped out of your quarters last night, which being contrary to the law, puts you in a worse position than you were. You will have to go before the magistrate now and take whatever medicine he prescribes for you."

"Then I'm under arrest again?"

"You are."

"I'd like to see your authority for holding up this lad," said Smith, coming forward.

"What business is that of yours?"

"A whole lot. I've got a contract with this young trader to take me some distance along the road, and some of my property is in his wagon. You can't take this boy without his wagon, as you have no right to abandon his property on the high road, and if you take the wagon it will inconvenience me. Now I don't propose to be inconvenienced for all the constables in Seaport, so you'll have to let this young fellow drive on to Plympton village yonder to accommodate me," said Smith.

"I'm not taking any orders from you, sir," replied the constable, sharply, "though I'm willing to do what I can to oblige you if you act civilly."

"All right, constable; I can't expect any more than that," said Smith. "Have a drink with me. It's the best whisky you ever tasted. I carry it as a medicine, and I only offer it to you in recognition of the favor you are doing me."

Smith offered him his flask and told him to drink hearty.

The constable made no bones about taking the drink, and then telling Jack to drive ahead, fell in behind the wagon and the party moved on as soon as Smith got up on the seat.

"Go slowly," he said to Jack.

"I told you I was in for it," said the young trader rather gloomily.

"Yes, I know, but it's a long distance back to Seaport, and it's my opinion you will reach Bath first."

"How will I when I'm under arrest?" replied Jack, in surprise.

"Don't worry about that. You're not back in jail yet."

"But I will be to-morrow."

"Perhaps you will; but somethin' might happen to prevent you gettin' there."

"I wish something would happen, but I don't see any chance of that now."

Smith looked behind.

"Stop your nag. There's somethin' the matter with the constable," he said.

Jack turned around and looked.

The officer was acting very strangely.

He was reeling in his seat like a drunken man.

Smith sprang down and stopped his horse just in time to catch him as he toppled over into the road.

"Come here, Greeley, and give me a hand."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Jack as he approached the buggy.

"The whisky I treated him to has gone to his head," grinned Smith. "These Maine officials are not accustomed to good spirits."

"Why, the man is unconscious," said Jack, astonished.

"He's tired and he thought he'd go to sleep."

"You've done something to him."

"I have? Did you see me touch him?"

"No; but that liquor you gave him must have been drugged."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"That's the only way I can account for this man's condition."

"You don't have to account for it. Help me lift him back on his seat."

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Drive him to the village and leave him in care of a friend of mine. By the time he recovers you'll be out of his reach."

"I'm afraid this is going to make more trouble for me," said Jack, doubtfully.

"Pooh! You had no hand in it. Go back to your wagon and follow me."

Smith, with one arm about the unconscious officer, started ahead in the buggy, while Jack, feeling rather shaky over this new turn of events, got up on his seat and fell in behind.

CHAPTER X.

SMITH MEETS HIS FRIENDS.

Plympton village was only half a mile away, and it didn't take them long to reach it.

Smith drove up to the door of the small village inn, and called out in a familiar way to a man who was seated in a chair on the piazza.

This man and several other of the residents of the place viewed the unconscious constable held up by Smith with curiosity, wondering what was the matter with him.

In response to Smith's hail, the man, who was the proprietor of the inn, came forward.

"Hello, Wat——" he began, but Smith choked him off with a look and a significant gesture. "What's the matter with that chap?" he added.

"Nothin' serious. He had a drink too much, and I want you to take charge of him till he recovers. This is his buggy, and he belongs in Seaport. It will take him some time to sleep his jag off, so just accommodate him with a room and put his horse in your stable. I'll pay the damage, of course."

"All right," said the inn-keeper. "By the way, your friends left a note for you. It is in the bar-room. You're going to stop awhile, aren't you. Dinner will be ready in half an hour."

"Sure we're goin' to stop. Here, catch hold of this gent, and then I'll get down and help you get him in the house," said Smith. "Drive into the yard, Greeley," he added to Jack. "We're goin' to stop here for dinner."

The boy did as he was told, and a hostler took charge of his rig.

Jack walked around in an aimless way until Smith came out and called him in to dinner.

They remained the best part of an hour at the inn and then started on again.

"Well," remarked Smith, after they had got under way. "I sidetracked that constable very neatly, don't you think so?"

"It will all be charged up against me when I'm caught in the end," replied Jack, gloomily. "It would have been better if you had let him alone."

"Pooh! What's the use of feelin' down in the mouth? Why should you get caught at all? It will be twenty-four hours before that officer gets back to Seaport to report what happened to him, and that will give you all the time you need to get out of the county."

"If I go straight on to Bath, as I suppose I'll have to now, it is probable that the police of that place will be on the lookout for me. It will be a simple matter for the Seaport authorities to telephone my description on with an order for my arrest."

"Don't you worry. I'll take care of you. I expect to overtake my friends at Greenville along about dark. We'll fix things for you somehow."

Jack said nothing.

To say the truth, he didn't like the way things had been fixed for him so far, and he felt rather dubious of availing himself of any further assistance from Smith.

Indeed, he had serious thoughts of turning back as soon as he parted from the man, which parting would no doubt take place as soon as he met his friends, make his way to Seaport, give himself up and try to get out of his scrape the best way he could.

He seemed to be getting deeper in the mire the longer he remained in Smith's company.

After leaving Plympton they made only a couple of brief stops to rest and water the horse.

No doubt Sancho wondered why he was kept on a continuous trot, but he took it philosophically, and reeled off the miles as steadily as clockwork.

They passed another village at a distance, taking a branch road that would save them an hour in reaching Greenville, so Smith said.

What Smith didn't appear to know about the route seemed hardly worth mentioning, and Jack wondered if he ever would find out who the man really was.

The shades of night were falling over the landscape when Smith pointed to a distant church spire and said that was Greenville.

At the head of Main street, a quarter of a mile outside of the village proper, stood a two-story building with a tall spreading oak tree in front of it.

This proved to be the Greenville Hotel, and Smith directed Jack to drive into the yard.

There were several men seated on the veranda, two, well bearded, apart from the others.

Smith got down as Jack walked his rig into the yard, and the bearded men got up and came forward to meet him.

Jack reined in close to a stout looking farm wagon which appeared to be heavily loaded.

Its contents were hidden by a waterproof covering pulled well down all over it, and secured by ropes to keep it in place.

Judging from the sand that was plentifully sprinkled on all parts of the wagon, Jack figured that the wagon was full of it.

It was seashore sand, mixed with pebbles and broken pieces of shells.

Jack paid no particular attention to the wagon, and presently strolled off toward the front of the hotel.

There he saw Smith and the two bearded men talking together.

"Those must be the friends he expected to meet," thought the boy. "I suppose I shall part company with him and his barrel. Well, I won't be sorry to do that. I distrust the man in spite of his friendly attitude. He did me a good turn in his own estimation, but not in mine. The drugging of that constable is likely to prove a serious matter for me. I ought to return to Seaport and give myself up. Then I could explain that I had no hand in the officer's downfall. If I don't return voluntarily, and am caught and carried back, I fancy I'll be handled without gloves."

Jack went on the veranda and sat down near the door.

Presently the supper bell rang and the other men on the veranda made a bee-line for the dining-room, which was at the back of the public room.

The conference between Smith and his bearded friends broke up, and they stepped toward the house.

As soon as Smith saw Jack he separated himself from his companions and joined him, leaving his friends to go into the dining-room by themselves.

"Are those the friends you expected to meet here, Mr. Smith?" the boy asked.

"Yes," replied Smith, taking him by the arm and leading him in.

"Then I suppose you'll go on with them?"

"No. They've got enough to look after. They have no room in their wagon for me and my barrel, so you and I'll stick together till we reach Bath."

Jack was sorry to learn that.

"So you're going to Bath?" he said.

"That's my destination. In order to prevent you from fallin' into the hands of the Bath police, in case they should be watchin' for you, we'll branch off of this road tomorrow and get into the city by a roundabout way."

"You seem to take a great deal of interest in me, Mr. Smith."

"Well, I don't want to see you get into trouble. My friends think that what I did to the constable back at Plympton is likely to lead to unpleasant results for both of us, and they suggested the way of reachin' Bath that I have decided to take both for your interest and my own."

"Don't you think it would be better for me to go back to Seaport and face the music?"

"No, I don't," replied Smith, in a very decided way.

Jack said no more, and finished his supper in silence.

When they came out of the dining-room, Smith went to the desk and registered his name and Jack's, and asked that they be assigned adjoining rooms, if possible.

"You'd better turn in soon," Smith said, "for we shall make an early start—as early as we did this mornin'. As you didn't have your regular allowance of sleep last night, I would advise you to make up for it to-night."

"I think it's a good idea," replied Jack, taking his key. "Where is my room?" he asked the proprietor.

"Go up those stairs yonder, turn to your right along the corridor, and keep on till you come to No. 23," was the answer he got.

Jack started up the stairs and Smith looked after him till he disappeared, then he walked outside, joined his friends on the piazza, and they went off somewhere together.

CHAPTER XI.

JACK MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Jack went to his room, which was directly over the kitchen, and overlooked the yard, and prepared to retire for the night, for he was tired and downhearted.

He pushed the lower sash of his window well up, for it was a warm night, and took a survey of the yard.

While he stood there looking out, three figures approached the big farm wagon, which Jack supposed was loaded with sand.

One of them carried a lantern.

It was not so dark anyway but Jack was able to identify them as Smith and his two bearded friends.

They went to the back of the wagon, and while Smith held the lantern, the other men undid the end of the covering and threw it back.

One of them mounted the wagon and began to dig into the sand with his hands, pushing it aside.

"I wonder what they're up to?" Jack asked himself. "Is there something in that wagon besides sand?"

The boy watched the man's actions with much interest.

Finally he seemed to have got a grip on something and began to tug away.

Smith held up the lantern, and the light enabled the watcher to see that the man was lifting something heavy out of the sand.

As soon as the thing was clear Jack saw that it was a tub, flat and bulky, exactly like the tubs he had seen two nights since in the kitchen of Rickards' house on the cliff road.

The man pushed the tub over the end of the wagon, where it was caught by Smith and the other bearded individual and lowered to the ground.

The fellow in the wagon carefully filled up the hole from which the tub had been taken, and smoothed the sand down evenly all over, after which he jumped down.

The cover was then replaced and retied.

Smith blew out the light and walked over to a small outhouse, leaving his companions standing by the tub.

Opening the door of the outhouse, he pulled out a wheelbarrow and trundled it over to the wagon.

The tub was lifted on it, and then Smith wheeled it over near the kitchen door, where he left it standing with the lantern on top of it.

He and his friends then strolled off around the corner of the hotel.

The sight of that tub had started a train of thought in Jack's mind.

It had given rise to a rather startling suspicion.

Did that wagon contain the tubs he had seen in the house where he had first met Rickards?

Was this the scheme that the allies of the liquor smugglers had adopted to get a quantity of the cognac into Bath without attracting attention?

Jack recalled what he had overheard Noakes say to Rickards in the caverns which he and Jessie were hiding from them as they came their way.

Noakes remarked that he had a plan and would let Rickards into it later on.

Jack began to grow excited, like a person on the eve of an important discovery.

"I'll bet those two bearded chaps are Noakes and Rickards," he said. Why, he must be the chap the others called Watling—the fellow who caught Jessie and I at the back entrance, and who Caleb Stone knocked out with a piece of rock in the lower cavern, thus enabling us to escape from the clutches of the three rascals. I can now account for the familiar tone of his voice, but I don't wonder I couldn't recognize him in the daylight with those red whiskers on. To think I've ridden all the way from the outskirts of Seaport in his company and never suspected his identity! How he must have laughed in his sleeve at me."

There was no more thought of sleep for Jack.

"Here's a chance to square myself with the Government if my suspicions are correct. I must make sure that I'm right before I make a move. The question is, how will I do it? I might go down in the yard as soon as things get quieter and make an inspection of that wagon, though after what I've seen it seems hardly necessary to do that, for the fact that if one tub was taken out of it there must be others still there that probably will not be disturbed till the wagon reaches Bath. If I could make certain of the identity of Smith's bearded friends, that would solve the problem to my satisfaction. I don't see any way of doing it to-night, and to-night is the time I ought to do it."

Jack sat beside the window and thought the matter over long and earnestly. The chance of not only getting out of his own trouble, but also securing a portion at least of the Government reward, spurred his energies.

While he sat there he heard steps coming along the corridor outside.

He recognized the tones of Smith's voice.

The handle of his door was tried, but as he had locked it, of course the person on the other side couldn't open it.

Then there came a light knock on the panel.

Jack took no notice of it, but remained as quiet as a mouse.

The knock was repeated, and then he heard Smith say: "He's dead to the world. He'll sleep like a top till he's called in the mornin'. Come in my room and we'll finish our talk."

Jack heard the men enter the adjoining room.

A moment later the window within four feet of the spot where the boy sat was thrown up with a bang.

"I don't see why these hotel people keep their windows closed in such weather," said the voice of Smith. "This room is as stuffy as a closet."

"Well, let's finish our talk, for I want to turn in," said one of the others impatiently.

It struck Jack that the voice belonged to Noakes.

"We can't take the tubs to Flint's place now that he has sent me warning that his store is being watched night and day by Government sleuths, who are only waiting for some tangible evidence to arrest him," went on the speaker. "That being the case, we must find some other market for the brandy. This is not an easy thing to do off-hand. In the meanwhile we must find a secure hiding place for the lot we have on the wagon."

"Why not leave it here just as it is?" suggested Smith.

"There is nothing suspicious about a load of common sand."

"That's where you're wrong, Watling." Jack's heart gave a jump when he heard the name pronounced. "If a revenue man comes here and sees that hand, he's bound to probe it on general principles. I know I would if I were one of them."

"What's the matter with buryin' the tubs, then?" said Smith—otherwise Watling.

"No, I have a better plan. On the road we are going to take to Bath to-morrow there is an old disused mill on a dried-up stream two miles this side of the city. I have decided to make use of it as a storehouse for the cognac until the Government grows less active. We'll take our load there. Inside of a couple of hours we can take the brandy out of the tubs, repack the fish, and after hiding the liquor we'll go straight into the city and unload at Flint's. Of course, as soon as we have unloaded, the officers will make their appearance, thinking they have secured a prize at last; but when they overhaul the tubs they'll find nothing but salt fish, and so Flint, as well as ourselves, will have the laugh on them, and it will serve to soften suspicion against him."

"That's a good scheme," laughed Smith.

"In the meantime, Rickards, whom we left at the cavern storehouse, will manage to keep us informed concerning the movements of the revenue people on the coast. He will also fix up another lot of tubs and have them ready for us to move on to the mill at the first favorable chance. In this way I hope to get all the cognac away from the shore and safely housed in the neighborhood of Bath. Our Canadian friends will not, of course, attempt to run any more stuff into the country for some time to come. It would not only be too hazardous, but it would be a useless proceeding until we have worked off the present lot on our hands. In any case, they wouldn't do any more business with us until we have turned over the money due them. Understand?"

"Sure," replied the bogus Smith.

"Now about this boy," went on Noakes. "He is the cause of much of our trouble, and it is my purpose to get square with him by implicating him in this business. I'll leave that job to you, Watling. You'd better go downstairs right away, take the brandy out of that tub we removed from the wagon and conceal the bottles among his stock in trade. We'll part company with him a short distance this side of the old mill, relieving him of the barrel you got him to fetch along. That the Government agents may be on the lookout for him, I'll send a telephone message to the Bath police from Bridgewater village, when we stop there early to-morrow afternoon, describing him and his team, and giving information concerning the road by which he'll enter Bath, and the smuggled brandy which is concealed in his wagon. That will fix him, while his escape from the Seaport jail will clinch matters against him. If he can get out of that scrape he'll be much smarter than I take him to be."

"Forewarned is forearmed," muttered Jack to himself. "I'll slip down into the yard and see where Watling, alias Smith, hides that brandy, and remove it after he has returned to the house."

Thus speaking, Jack softly left his room, taking care to

lock the door and put the key in his pocket, and was hiding behind the loaded wagon when Watling made his appearance in the yard with a basket full of cognac bottles.

Jack watched him distribute the smuggled brandy about in his stock in trade, and as soon as the counterfeit Smith went away he removed every bottle from its hiding place and dropped them into the well in the yard.

"That settles the trap that was prepared for me. Now I'll do a little trapping myself, since one good turn deserves another," said the boy to himself.

Instead of returning to his room he sat down with his back against the table door, which he saw was not locked, and watched the hotel.

A couple of hours passed away and the lights went out one by one.

When the back of the building was in darkness he slipped around to the front and saw that the place was closed for the night.

He waited awhile longer to make sure that every one connected with the house had retired, and then he returned to the stable, led Sancho out from his stall, harnessed him to the wagon, and walked him out to the road.

Then he got on the seat and drove into the village.

CHAPTER XII.

JACK CALLS ON CONSTABLE BROWN.

It was close on to midnight and all the stores and houses were dark and silent.

He drove slowly along Main street, hoping to find one place where the occupants had not yet retired, his purpose being to find out where he could connect with the police authorities of the place.

Ordinarily he would have been disappointed, but it happened that next day was publication day of the village weekly, and the newspaper pressroom was lighted up, for the pressman was running off the limited edition on a small hand cylinder machine which printed two pages at a time.

Jack reined in, got down and walked to the door of the printing office.

Opening it, he entered the place.

The pressman, observing that he was a stranger, looked at him inquiringly.

"Excuse me for intruding, but can you tell me where I'll find the head constable of this village?" asked Jack.

"The head constable!" exclaimed the pressman. "That's William Brown. Yes, I can tell you where he lives, but as you appear to be a stranger here, I doubt if you would be able to find his house. I'm nearly through work. If you don't mind waiting fifteen or twenty minutes, I'll take you around to his place."

"I'll wait," answered Jack.

"Here's a copy of the paper. It will employ your time till I'm ready to go."

Jack took the copy of the Greenville News, and, standing under a lamp, looked it over.

Among other news was a long paragraph reproduced

from the Seaport Daily Argus, relating to the liquor smuggling business on the coast near that town.

It said that the series of natural caverns in the cliffs near Seaport was believed to be used as the hiding place for a load of French brandy lately landed in the neighborhood, but that several sharp searches by the revenue officers had failed to reveal just where the liquor was stored.

It was known that a previously landed cargo of the cognac had been successfully distributed about the State by the allies of the Canadian smugglers, and the Government was very anxious to prevent the last consignment from being carried into the interior and sold to liquor merchants.

The head inspector had recently come into possession of information which led him to believe he had located the chief agent of the smugglers, but nothing could be done till he was caught with the goods in his possession.

The paragraph then went on to give a brief statement of the alleged encounter of Caleb Stone, Jessie Stone and a traveling boy trader named Jack Greeley, with three men in the caverns.

These men were supposed to be Rickards, Noakes and Watling, who divided their time between a small farm on the cliff road and the fishing industry.

They had lately come under suspicion as the presumed link between the smugglers and their suspected agent, but nothing had been found to criminate them.

The story related to the inspector by Caleb Stone, however, had induced that officer to secure a warrant for the arrest of the men, and the boy trader had been locked up to make sure of his appearance as a witness when wanted.

That was all.

There was nothing about Jack's escape from the jail, nor the failure of the authorities to arrest the three men in question.

By the time the boy had finished reading the account, the pressman had completed his work, and was washing up at the sink in a dark corner of the room.

He then put out the lights and left the building with Jack.

"Got a rig, have you?" said the pressman, seeing Jack's horse and wagon.

"Yes. Jump up on the seat and direct me where to drive," said the boy.

Ten minutes later the pressman pointed to a cottage on a side street about a third of a mile from the newspaper office.

"There's where Constable Brown lives," he said.

"Thank you. Much obliged to you for the trouble you've taken to point out the house. I want to see the constable on a matter of some importance."

"You're welcome," replied the pressman, as Jack reined in at the officer's door. "Good-night."

"Good-night," replied Jack, following him to the walk, and then walking up to the door of the cottage, he gave the bell a tug.

A second pull was necessary before any notice was taken of Jack's presence.

Then an upper window was thrown open and a man's head protruded.

"Hello, what's wanted?" he inquired, rather gruffly.

"I want to see Constable Brown," replied Jack.

"That's my name. Who are you?"

"You don't know me, as I'm a stranger; but I have important information to give you that will put money in your pocket."

"Eh? Money in my pocket! What is this information?"

"Put on your clothes and come to the door, then I'll tell you."

The constable seemed shy about coming down on what, he reasoned, might be a bootless errand.

"Can't you give me an idea of what you have to tell me?" he said.

"It's about those liquor smugglers."

"What about 'em? What have I got to do with them?"

"If you can capture a load of their brandy the Government is sure to make it all right with you."

"How can I capture it?" asked the officer, with some interest in his tone.

"I know where it is, and I'll put you onto it. All I ask is a rake-off if you will do the right thing."

"You really know where there's a load of the liquor?"

"I do, and it's not a mile from here."

"I'll be right down."

The constable shut the window, and Jack saw a light flare up in his room.

Inside of ten minutes the front door opened and Constable Brown stood on the threshold.

"Come inside," he said, and Jack entered the house.

The officer led him into his sitting-room, and there Jack told him about the wagon load of fish tubs, in which were hidden a considerable number of bottles of foreign brandy concealed under a covering of sea sand in the yard of the Greenville Hotel.

"How did you make this discovery?" asked the constable.

Jack explained as much of the matter as he thought prudent, omitting, of course, the fact that he had escaped from the Seaport jail, and what the bogus Smith had done to the pursuing officer.

"What's your name?"

"Jack Greeley."

"What's your business?"

"I'm a traveling trader."

The Greenville Times not having yet been issued to the public, the constable did not know that his young visitor was the boy who was supposed to be detained as a Government witness in the Seaport jail, consequently the last frank answers did not enlighten him to any extent.

"Well, I'll drive to the hotel with you and investigate that load of sand. If I find your statement substantiated, I'll take charge of it in the name of the law, and I'll remember you in case I'm remunerated for the capture."

"Better take one of your assistants with you. It is possible we may be interrupted, for those rascals may leave us in the yard, and if they do there'll be something doing or I'm mistaken," said Jack.

"Your advice is good. I'll get my revolver and then we'll go around to the house of one of my deputies and rouse him up," said the officer.

They were presently seated in the boy's wagon, and the constable took the reins himself.

In ten minutes he stood in front of a vine-clad cottage, got down and began to hammer on the door.

A window was thrown up and a man's head appeared.

"Is that you, Brown?" he asked.

"Dress yourself and come down prepared for business," replied the head constable, in an authoritative way.

"Yes, sir; I'll be down directly."

The deputy lost no time in making his appearance.

"Got your revolver, Jones?" asked Constable Brown.

"Yes, sir."

"Jump on the wagon, then. I'll explain matters to you as we go along. Turn around and drive ahead till I direct you to turn off," he added to Jack as the three managed to find room on the seat.

When they struck Main street, Jack recognized it and turned to the right of his own accord.

From that point the way was straight ahead to the hotel.

In due time they approached the house and Jack reined in just before they reached it.

"We'll go the rest of the way on foot," he said. "The less noise we make the better. Those chaps may sleep with one eye open."

The constable agreed with him, so the three left the wagon and walked into the hotel yard.

Jack pointed the big wagon out.

"Under that covering is apparently just a load of sand; but under the sand are tubs partly filled with fish and partly with bottles of cognac. They removed one tub some hours ago, but there ought to be eleven still in the wagon."

"We'll see if there are," said Constable Brown. "Take hold, Jones, and loosen these ropes so we can get the end of the cover off."

The work was speedily accomplished, and a load of sand was exposed to their view.

"Now to probe this sand and see what it conceals," said Brown.

He shoved his arm down into it.

"I feel something. I guess your information is all right, young man."

Jack sprang on top of the sand and began to clear it away from one spot.

A dark object was presently exposed.

The constable's deputy took a hand now, and one of the concealed tubs was brought into view.

"Hand it out," said Constable Brown. "It will be necessary for me to open it before I can be wholly sure of my line of action in this matter."

"Carry it to my wagon. I have tools that will get the cover off," said Jack. "The noise we will make won't be heard here, then."

Between them the officers carried the tub out of the yard and down the road to the wagon, where the tub was speedily opened, its contents inspected, and the truth of Jack's statement verified.

"That's enough to satisfy me," said Brown. "We'll put this tub on your wagon, and then I'll go back and seize the prize in the name of the Government."

"You'll arrest the three men, won't you?" said Jack. "They're wanted in Seaport."

"Certainly. Describe their appearance."

Jack did so.

"The chap with the red whiskers is Watling. One of the other two, whose faces are disguised with beards, is Noakes, the leader of the bunch. The third man is a stranger to me. Make sure of getting Noakes and Watling, and you'll make a hit with the Government."

"Have you got a revolver?"

"No. The police——"

Jack stopped in some confusion, for he had almost let the cat out of the bag by saying that the Seaport police had taken his gun from him.

Constable Brown took no notice of his break, but said that he had better remain where he was for the present.

The two Greenville constables then started back for the hotel.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

Jack, however, did not relish the idea of remaining in the background.

He had an idea that his services might be useful to the officers, for they had three men to capture, and from what he knew of two of those men he felt sure that the country officers would find a strenuous job on their hands.

Besides, Jack was anxious to square himself with the Government inspector for running away from Seaport, and he thought he would be able to do that by helping in the capture of the three allies of the smugglers.

As soon as the officers disappeared into the yard he followed them.

He took the precaution to take from the wagon a stout cudgel he had there.

Constable Brown rapped on the back door of the hotel.

He made noise enough to attract attention, and a window above was raised and a head stuck out.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" demanded a voice in no pleasant tones.

"Are you Simpson, the proprietor of this house?" asked Brown.

"Yes. Who are you?"

"Constable Brown. Come down, I want to see you."

"What do you want to see me about?"

"When you come down I'll tell you."

"All right, I'll come down," replied the hotel man.

At that moment Jack heard the sound of wheels along the county road.

A buggy with a single occupant was rapidly approaching.

"I believe that's the constable that Watling drugged. He has recovered, and instead of going back to Seaport to report his failure to capture me, he determined to follow me till he got me. He's got here in good time to help things out."

As the buggy came dashing up, Jack ran out into the road and waved his arms as a signal for the driver to stop.

The Seaport constable, for it was he, reined in and asked what was wanted, for he did not immediately recognize the boy as the one he was after.

"You're after me, I believe. I'm Jack Greeley."

The officer uttered an exclamation.

"Yes, I'm after you, and the man who was with you

when I met you to-day," he said. "He's responsible for your escape. Do you give up?"

"Yes."

"Where is your companion?"

"You mean the man with the red side whiskers? He's asleep in this hotel. You have got here just in time to help arrest him and two companions."

"Two companions! What do you mean," said the constable, getting down into the road with a pair of handcuffs in his hands.

"Hold on, officer, don't handcuff me till you understand how things stand, then you won't. I'm not as bad as you think I am. I've just brought two constables here from the village to arrest those three men and take charge of a wagon load of smuggled brandy."

"What!" cried the constable, clearly astonished, but by no means convinced.

Jack hurriedly explained the situation to him, and told him the two officers were in the yard trying to get into the house.

He went along with the boy to assure himself of the truth of Jack's statement.

They found Brown and Jones waiting for the appearance of Simpson, the proprietor.

Those officers confirmed Jack's story about the smuggled liquor, and Brown admitted that the information had been furnished to him by the boy, who had brought them to the scene in his wagon.

The Seaport man introduced himself as an officer, and Brown said he was glad to hear it, as he guessed another man was needed to round up the three men.

Simpson, who had taken his time in coming down, now opened the door and wanted to know what the trouble was.

"We are here to arrest three of your guests," said Brown.

"Three of my guests! Who do you mean?"

"The man with the red side whiskers is one," spoke up Jack, "and the two bearded men are the others."

"Why, they are respectable travelers. Seems to me you are the boy who came here with Mr. Smith, the man with the whiskers."

"I am, and I know his name is not Smith, but Watling. I also know that one of the other men is called Noakes. The three are disguised, and are wanted in Seaport by the revenue men," replied Jack.

Simpson glared at Jack.

"Show us to the rooms occupied by these three guests of yours," said Brown.

Simpson, however, did not seem anxious to accommodate the constable.

He objected to disturbing his guests at that hour.

"Look here, Simpson, you do as I ask you," said Brown, sharply.

The proprietor reluctantly agreed.

As the party was entering through the kitchen, Jack caught the Seaport officer by the sleeve.

"I think this man is in with those chaps," he said. "I noticed that he was on very friendly terms with Watling when that man registered his name and mine on the hotel book. Better keep your eye on him and see that he doesn't try to pass those men off their danger."

"I have the same opinion about him as you have," re-

plied the Seaport constable. "I believe those fellows are thick with all the hotel people between Seaport and Bath. I think you and I had better go around to the front of the house and let Brown and his deputy attend the matter inside. One of the fellows is likely to give them the slip, and we must cut off his escape."

"All right," said Jack. "I think it would be a good idea to lock this door and cut off exit at the back."

"Good idea. We'll do it."

They locked the kitchen door on the outside and went around to the front of the house.

Hardly had they got there before they heard two pistol shots inside.

In a moment or two a door in the front of the house was flung open and two men came running out.

One was Watling in his shirt sleeves, and the other a bearded man, half dressed.

"Stop!" cried the Seaport constable.

They paid no attention, but made for the buggy.

The constable fired at the bearded man, who was in advance, and he fell into the road.

Jack sprang forward to intercept Watling, but the rascal was too swift for him, and he reached the buggy.

As he reached for the reins the constable fired at him but missed.

Jack made a dive for the horse's bridle and caught it just as Watling started him up.

With an imprecation Watling reached for and drew his revolver.

Taking aim as well as he could at Jack, he fired.

The bullet missed the boy by a hair.

Here the constable rushed up and covered Watling, who, seeing the game was up, surrendered.

Brown and Jones now came out of the hotel with the other bearded man in custody, handcuffed.

Watling was handcuffed by his captor, and then the fellow in the road was examined.

He was unconscious from a bullet wound in the head, and when the beard was removed from his face he proved to be Noakes.

After a consultation the Seaport officer decided to take charge of both the prisoners and the wagon load of tubs and sand, and take them to his town.

Brown agreed to let Jones go, so the two horses belonging to the wagon were taken from their stalls and hitched up.

While this was being done the wounded man was taken in the buggy to the house of a doctor not far away.

The physician was aroused and he brought Noakes to his senses, and fixed up his wound.

Noakes was then brought back to the hotel, where he was put on Jack's wagon and tied there.

The other two were lashed to the top of the big wagon, and all being in readiness, the Seaport officer ordered the procession to proceed, the large wagon leading the way, Jack coming next, and the officer himself in his buggy coming last where he could keep his eyes on the launch.

It was close on to sunrise when they reached Plympton, where the officer called a halt.

The proprietor of the inn was aroused up and asked if he had a telephone connection with Seaport.

The constable then connected with the Seaport police department, and told of the capture that had been made.

He gave all the credit of it to Jack, and said that the boy ought not to be bothered on his return.

The party waited for an early breakfast to be served to them, and then proceeded on their way.

It was a long and weary day's travel for both the Seaport constable and Jack, neither of whom had slept any the night previous.

They stopped only for dinner and supper, and it was nearly ten o'clock when they reached the Wheatsheaf Inn.

Here they found a constable and several revenue officers waiting for them.

The Seaport constable turned the big wagon and the prisoners over to them, and after they had started back to town, he and Jack took rooms at the Wheatsheaf Inn and turned in for a good sleep.

They got up late next morning, had a good breakfast, and then started for town.

In due time they drew near the Stone cottage.

"I'll turn in here, if it's all the same to you," said Jack. "As soon as I put up my team I'll go to the station-house and report."

The kitchen door opened and Jack expected to see Jessie coming to greet him.

Instead of which Old Caleb, and a woman as ancient as himself, appeared.

"Come back, have you?" said the old man.

"Yes," replied Jack.

Caleb then introduced the old woman as his sister, who had come to live with him and his grand-daughter.

He explained that Jessie had gone into town to make some purchases, but would soon get back.

"I guess I'll dump out that old barrel that Watlin seemed to think so much of. It's a disgrace to the wagon. I'll look into it later on and see if there is anything valuable in it. If there is, and I think I have a right to appropriate it, why I'll be so much ahead," thought the boy.

He let down the back of the wagon, grabbed the barrel and yanked it out.

The top hoop came off and the heavy barrel slipped from Jack's grasp.

Striking the ground it fell over and from under the displaced rubbish a stream of gold coin and banknotes was revealed to the astonished gaze of the three.

"Money! A load of it," ejaculated old Caleb. "Where did you get it?"

"I'll tell you later," cried the boy, springing into his wagon and picking out one of his bright new tin pans. "Help me pick it up, Mr. Stone."

The old man readily lent his aid to an occupation that was pleasing to him.

While they were securing the money, most of which was in bright gold coin, Jack told old Caleb how the barrel came to be in his possession.

"It must be money those chaps saved from some wreck," said the old man. "They never earned it, that's certain. It's yours now, for those fellows will never dare claim it. They'd have to explain how they came by it, and they know better than to do that, for the chances are it wouldn't get the money back for them. You hold on to it, Jack. It will give you a start in life, and will be just what you

and Jessie need to get married on. She told me that she and you are going to be spliced some day, and I guess she couldn't get a better or a smarter husband than you. There was nothing in the trunk you helped me to land of any account."

Jack broke the barrel up and tossed the pieces into the firewood pile in the shed, while the rubbish he dumped into a barrow and wheeled it away to a hole in a distant corner of the property.

When he got back, Jessie was on hand to give him a warm reception.

After dinner he went to the inspector's office and reported.

That official was now in good humor over the capture of the three men and the load of tubs, and he readily took the ban off the boy's movements, and assured him that he was entitled to a part of what the liquor would eventually fetch at auction, the rest going to the Government and Constable Brown and his deputy of Greenville.

Still there was the \$5,000 worth of hidden brandy in the caverns, as well as the man Rickards, to be accounted for yet.

Having recovered his revolver, he and old Caleb began a search of the lower cavern, next day, but nothing coming of it, they decided to hide in the place and watch for Rickards to come forth at night.

They put in three nights without result, but on the fourth they saw Rickards appear from a certain spot.

They jumped on him and overpowered him, tying him so he couldn't get away.

They then found the secret opening to the inner cavern, which was filled with cases of cognac, as well as a collection of tubs ready packed for removal.

Next day Jack notified the inspector, who sent men with him to take possession of the liquor.

When it was sold Jack received a little over \$2,000 for his share, and the Government added the \$500 reward that had originally been offered.

The money that Jack had come into possession of through the barrel footed up about \$80,000, and as no one ever laid claim to it, he considered it his own.

In a short time he and Jessie were married, for old Caleb said there was no need of them waiting.

In after life Jack always said that his greatest piece of luck was securing such a dear, sweet wife as Jessie Stone; but old Caleb entertained a different idea.

In his opinion, the boy trader's greatest luck was finding the barrel of coin.

THE END.

Read "DRIVEN TO THE WALL; OR, THE NERVE OF A WALL STREET BOY," which will be the next number (254) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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GOOD STORIES.

In Africa the scissors imported from Sheffield were found to be rather dangerous weapons to place in the hands of the natives, owing to their sharp points. The Solingen Steel Works sent a lot of round-pointed scissors out, which found favor, and now Germany has captured the whole market.

One of the most remarkable and puzzling of all the natural phenomena in the Yellowstone National Park has recently been discovered by Winter Keeper Bunsen of Norris. It is a geyser that plays regularly every twenty-four hours and throws a stream 135 feet high, but the water is ice cold instead of boiling hot. The geyser is called the Valentine. The usually accepted theory of geyser activity seems to have received rather a severe shock by the discovery of this latest freak. It has been the accepted hypothesis that subterranean water coming in contact with lime and certain chemicals generate heat and steam, which seeking vent, cause the eruption.

Brazilian cocoanut palms live from 600 to 700 years, and the Arabs assert that the date palm frequently reaches the age of 200 to 300 years. Wallan's oak, near Paisley, Scotland, is known to be over 700 years old, and there are eight olive trees on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, which are known to have been flourishing in 1099. The yews at Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, were old trees when, in 1132, the abbey was built, and a redwood in Mariposa Grove, California, is a manifold centenarian. Baobab trees of Africa have been computed to be over 5,000 years old, and the deciduous cypress at Chapultepec is considered to be of a still greater age. Humboldt said that the Dracena Draco, at Orotava, on Teneriffe, was one of the oldest inhabitants of the earth.

David Crockett was born at Limestone, Tenn., in 1786. In the Creek War of 1813-'14 he commanded a battalion of mounted riflemen, under General Jackson. He was elected to the Tennessee Legislature, 1821-'24, and a member of Congress, 1827-'31 and 1833-'35. His independence caused a break with Jackson. He entered the Texan army in the War of Independence and met his death at Fort Alamo, Texas, on March 6, 1835, after an heroic defense against hordes of Mexicans. A prolonged siege was brought to a close by the surrender of six survivors, and among them was Crockett. By order of Santa Anna they were put to death. The slogan of the Texans became, "Remember the Alamo!" Crockett's motto in life was, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead!"

At Chufu, the birthplace of Confucius, there are to be seen some remarkable examples of sounding-stones, or stone gongs. One of these stones, which are composed of a grayish oolitic limestone, has been shaped into a cover for an incense-dish placed in front of the tomb of the grandson of Confucius. When struck with a stick, or with the knuckles, it rings like bronze, and the sound is so distinct that it is difficult to believe, without inspection, that the object is not really composed of metal. Sounding-stones are known in other countries. There is a bridge at Corick, in County Mayo, Ireland, which is locally known as the "musical bridge," because the stones forming the coping give out a musical note when struck.

JOKES AND JESTS.

Wife—My dear, the nursery needs redecorating. What would you suggest for the walls? Husband—Corrugated iron.

"He says he courts the fullest investigation possible. He has nothing whatever to fear." "Is that so?" "Yes, and he's hired three of the cleverest lawyers in town to prove it."

Penelope—I hear it's all off between you and Victor. What was the trouble? Mehitabel—His absent-mindedness. The other night he forgot that I had already accepted him and he proposed again.

Gabe Goshall (on the southeast corner of the dry goods box)—It must be tur'ble t' be ketched out in a brain-storm. Hi Hemlock (on the southwest corner of the dry goods box)—W'y, all a feller'd hev t' do 'ud be t' h'ist one o' them paranoias, an' he'd never know 'twuz rainin'.

"Father," said little Rollo, "what is appendicitis?" "My son," answered the cynical parent, "appendicitis is something that enables a good doctor to open up a man's anatomy and remove his entire bank account."

"Dad, why are the Africans black?" "Because they are always in the sun." "Dad, why does the servant put the linen on the line in the sun?" "Because the sun makes it white." "Dad, how is it the Africans become black in the sun and the linen white?" "Because—here, that's enough. You ask too many silly questions."

A young gentleman of the colored persuasion had promised his girl a pair of long white gloves for a Christmas gift. Entering a large department store he at last found the counter where these goods were displayed, and, approaching rather hesitatingly, remarked, "Ah want a pair ob gloves." "How long do you want them?" inquired the business-like clerk. "Ah doesn't want fo' to rent 'em; ah wants fo' to buy 'em," replied the other indignantly.

When the teacher called the class for geography she noticed that Eben Wilkins, her dullest pupil, wore a particularly cheerful smile. "You look as if you knew your lesson to-day," she said encouragingly. "Yes'm, I do," he answered briskly. "The answer to the first question is 'North,' and the next is 'Alaska,' and the next is 'United States,' and the next is——" "But that is not the way to learn your lesson, Eben," and the teacher struggled for a properly severe expression. "You must skip about. That is what I shall do in asking the questions." Eben looked as if the joy of living had departed once for all. "But supposing I didn't skip about just the way you do," he said plaintively, "then I'd be all mixed up."

OUTLAWED BY INDIANS

By Paul Braddon.

In the fall of 1866, while I was attached to Fort Hays as a Government scout and dispatch rider, the Sioux and Cheyennes were consolidating for the war which opened in the spring. Bands of stragglers were riding about the country, stealing and murdering whenever opportunity offered, and one day in October, while returning to the fort from a long ride to the north after some missing horses, I encountered one of these predatory bands. It numbered twelve men, and a son of the Cheyenne chief known as Pawnee Killer was in command. While war had not been declared, and while the Indians did not hesitate to appear at the forts and trading posts, some one was being butchered every day. I had been on the watch for prowlers, and was as well prepared as a lone man could be. I had a Winchester and two revolvers, and the only drawback was that I had found two of the horses and had them with me. As they would not drive I had roped them together and then made them fast to my saddle.

I was skirting a long, narrow ridge, badly broken by outcroppings of rock, and the time was 2 o'clock in the afternoon. All of a sudden I caught sight of Indians about half a mile away coming up the same side of the ridge. Indeed, I heard them yelling before I saw them, and I turned sharp to the left and forced the horses up the ridge among a mass of boulders and outcroppings. The redskins caught sight of me as I went up, but did not immediately approach. I could see that they were confused, and a dozen or more shots were fired, and I was puzzling over the matter when I heard some one clattering over the stony ground, and next moment a white man jumped down beside me and exclaimed:

"Stranger, for heaven's sake stand 'em off until I can get my wind! They are Cheyennes and have killed my brother!"

Three young bucks on foot had been in chase of the fugitive, and they were within 200 feet of me as I rose up. The leveled rifle brought them to a sudden halt, and after gazing at me for a moment they turned and descended the ridge to join the rest of the band. My visitor lay down, and it was five minutes before he could get breath to explain.

"We were out looking for cattle which stampeded from our emigrant camp on the Saline Fork. These brutes killed my brother and took me prisoner. This was yesterday, and about a mile below here they had gone into camp and built a fire to torture me, when I made a break. Give me your revolver, for they'll be sure to charge us."

I gave him one of the weapons and soon after an Indian appeared on the foot of the ridge, made signs of peace, and asked for a talk. Those on the level below me drew away about forty rods to convince me that they meant fair, and I left my shelter and advanced a few paces to ask the errand of the young warrior. While I was thus engaged the man behind me was rolling the loose rocks together to strengthen the position.

The redskin said he came to demand a prisoner. They had no quarrel with me, but the prisoner had shot one of their number in cold blood and must die. They only asked for justice. I had their word that I might ride away in safety, but the prisoner they would have at any sacrifice. I did not wait an instant before replying that the man would not be given up and that I was ready for any move on their part to take him. The buck had left his rifle behind him, and I stood there also apparently unarmed. As a matter of fact each of

us had a revolver. We were about half pistol shot apart and as I gave him my ultimatum, he had turned, whipped out a revolver and fired a bullet which passed within an inch of my head. Then he uttered a yell and started to run, but he was too late. My bullet struck him under the right arm and went clear through him, and he fell and curled up by a boulder to die.

The situation was understood by the Indians below me almost instantly, and the entire crowd dismounted and charged up the ridge. It was a very foolish move on their part and proved the excitability of young bucks. We had them dead under our fire, and we killed three of them with as many bullets. I got a bead on Pawnee Killer's son with my revolver as he urged his hesitating band to push up the ridge, and when he went down I thought I had killed him. With his fall the fighting ceased. The survivors made a rush for their horses and then disappeared to the east, leaving the four dead ones where they fell. I was puzzled at their conduct, and at first regarded it as a ruse, but when I came to stand up and look around I saw a party of thirteen white men—hunters, trappers, stockmen and adventurers—coming up from the north on their way to the fort.

The name of the young man who so cleverly escaped was Austin Brice, and for the next year he was in Government employ at the fort. He had not shot an Indian, as stated by the flag-of-truce bearer, but the murder of his brother was entirely unprovoked and cold-blooded, and the Indians meant to torture him to death.

The bullet which struck the young chief did not kill him, as I had at first supposed. It struck him alongside the nose, ran down to the corner of his mouth, followed the line of the lips down to the left-hand corner, and passed over the chin. The result was to give him a most horrible-looking mouth, making him an object of ridicule and contempt; and he not only swore to have my life, but Pawnee Killer proclaimed the fact that he would give five ponies and a revolver to any one who would bring him my scalp. Therefore, while actual hostilities had not yet begun, there was a price set upon my head, and I was in more personal danger than if the redskins were on the warpath.

The first attempt was made about two weeks after the fight on the ridge. A Sioux Indian, who claimed to have been outlawed from his tribe because he favored peace with the whites, came to Fort Hays, ostensibly for protection. He had no weapons, seemed to be honest and straightforward, and all the men had a good word for him. On the third day he came to me and asked my assistance to recover his rifle, blanket, a lot of powder and lead and various other articles which he said he had cached at a spot about twelve miles down the Smoky Hill Fork, in a grove. When he described the spot I remembered it very well, and next morning, having permission of the commandant, we set out. I was on horseback and the Indian afoot. I had my usual weapons, while he had an army musket. He gave his name as Little Smoke and was a typical warrior in build and demeanor. Before we left the fort an old hunter called me aside and said:

"Do you believe thar is a cache?"

"Why not?"

"Bekase an Injun says thar is. Allus take 'em contrary to what they say. Is your scalp nailed on?"

"Do you mistrust the man?"

"Never saw one yit that I didn't. I'm going to bet my rifle agin a keg of powder that you don't come back."

As soon as we were out of sight of the fort I motioned for the Indian to take the lead. He seemed to take it as a matter of course, and he led off with a lope and held it for six or seven miles without a halt. I had not only to keep an eye

him, but scan the country as well. He appeared to be on the lookout, as well he might be if his story was true, and about 11 o'clock we approached the spot where he claimed to have hidden his property. I had kept him in the lead all the time, and we had had more or less shelter along the bank of the stream. Half a mile from the grove I drew rein and said:

"I will wait here while my brother goes forward after his property."

"Is the Swift Rider tired with the ride?" he sarcastically answered.

"One must keep watch for danger. I will do that, for you will be busy."

"If my white brother is afraid, he need not go."

"If my red brother has a cache in the grove let him look for it. If not, we will return to the fort."

He hesitated a moment and then, satisfied that I was on my guard, he walked away and soon disappeared in the grove. I had every confidence that the trees sheltered a band of redskins, and it would not have surprised me in the least to have seen a body of them dash out. I was therefore taken aback, at the end of about a quarter of an hour, to see Little Smoke reappear with a backload of stuff from his cache. He came straight toward me, but very slowly, and halted every few yards to adjust his burden. I was carefully watching him when my horse sniffed the air uneasily, and all at once it came to me that I was being stalked. I left the shelter of the cottonwoods for the open ground, and as I rode away two bullets zipped close to my head, having been fired from the opposite bank of the stream. At the same moment Little Smoke dropped his goods and fired on me with his musket.

While half a dozen Indians in my rear were yelling and shooting, I rode down to within 200 feet of the smooth-tongued traitor and dropped him dead in his tracks. There were five Indians in the ambush, and they mounted their ponies and pursued me for three or four miles, but I got safely away.

The second attempt was made in December. A half-breed Cheyenne—an old man with a very honest face—came into the fort and reported that a white man, a trapper, was in camp on the river above us with a broken leg, and he had volunteered to come in and report the case. The distance was not over five miles, but the snow lay deep on the ground and it was very sharp weather. The old man probably reasoned that I would be sent out to guide the relief party. He was asked to do so, but refused, even under promise of a gallon of whisky. This refusal aroused my suspicions, and instead of going out as a relief corps a dozen men went armed to the teeth. The place designated was a grove, and we approached it as near as possible under cover, and then made a sudden dash. Eight mounted Indians rushed out on the other side. There were evidences that they had been there in camp for two or three days.

In the spring, when war had been formally declared, most of my work was along the Smoky Hill stage route. When the stages finally ceased running I carried food and ammunition to the station employes or guided them safely to the posts. Lookout Station, twenty miles beyond Fort Hays, was more exposed to attack than any other on the route. The hut for the shelter of the men was half wood, half mud. Two stables filled with hay and oats flanked it, and stood dangerously near. While at every other station the men had made dug-outs for their protection, this precaution had been neglected at Lookout. Small bands of Indians had appeared and been stood off by the well-armed men, and they had come to believe that they could defeat any force likely to appear. On the morning of April 15 I was approaching Lookout with 600 Winchester cartridges for the men, when, just as day fairly broke, I was discovered and pursued by a band of about fifty Indians. I got

into the station after a lively chase, and within an hour it was surrounded by over a hundred redskins.

I had been recognized and they sent a flag of truce to offer the three men their lives if they would hand me over. This offer was twice repeated, and then the Indians settled down to besiege the station. During the day the firing was kept up at long range. All horses in the stables were killed before noon, but none of us were wounded. As night came I determined to get away, being under orders to report at Hays as soon as possible. The men encouraged me to go, saying they could hold the place until I sent assistance.

At about 9 o'clock I crept out of the hut, crawled on my hands and knees into the darkness, and after twice almost bumping against Indians, I got beyond their lines and headed for the fort. I was only three miles away when I saw the glare of the burning stables, which the redskins had crept up to and fired. The hut caught from the stables, and as the three brave fellows were finally driven out, they were shot down by the horde in waiting, and thus every vestige of the station was wiped out.

WOMEN FIGHT A BEAR

Roderick McDonald, who lives in one of the remote parts of a settlement on the Molus River, Kent county, New Brunswick, was absent from home a few nights ago, having left his wife and sister as the sole defenders of his household. Just at dusk the two women, who were busy about their household duties, were suddenly attracted by a bellowing among the cattle in the barnyard. Without the slightest hesitation they armed themselves with the only weapons on hand—an ax and a pitchfork—and sallied forth. Only a few steps had been traversed before they saw an enormous black bear that stood aggressively awaiting them.

At either side of him lay an ox which had fallen under his heavy blows, while the rest of the cattle were huddled closely in one corner of the yard bellowing piteously in their fright. Mrs. McDonald, excited at the sight of the dead animals, rushed at the bear with a pitchfork, thrusting it deep in his neck.

A roar of mingled rage and pain followed, and with a sweep of his paw he struck the weapon from her hands.

The other woman struck at the bear with the ax, disabling one of his forelegs.

Mrs. McDonald ran for her pitchfork, recovered it, and the two plucky women then went at bruin hammer and tongs. Mrs. McDonald wounded him with the pitchfork in front while her companion did deadly execution with the ax.

The bear was a very large one. The women had their clothes torn, but beyond a few scratches and the fright, suffered no injury. The bear was killed.

In Austria some of the smaller towns have laws so strict that it is hard to see how a boy can have much fun. He must not stone dogs or goat; he must not chase a goat; he must not climb trees; he must not throw missiles at another boy; he must not whistle as he goes along the street; he must not take a hitch on a wagon; he must not run, except for a doctor; he must not chase a pig; he must not knock a ball, nor play pull-away, nor fly a kite, without the permission of the town authorities. About the only game an Austrian boy can indulge in is to go down cellar and play high-spy by himself in the dark.

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